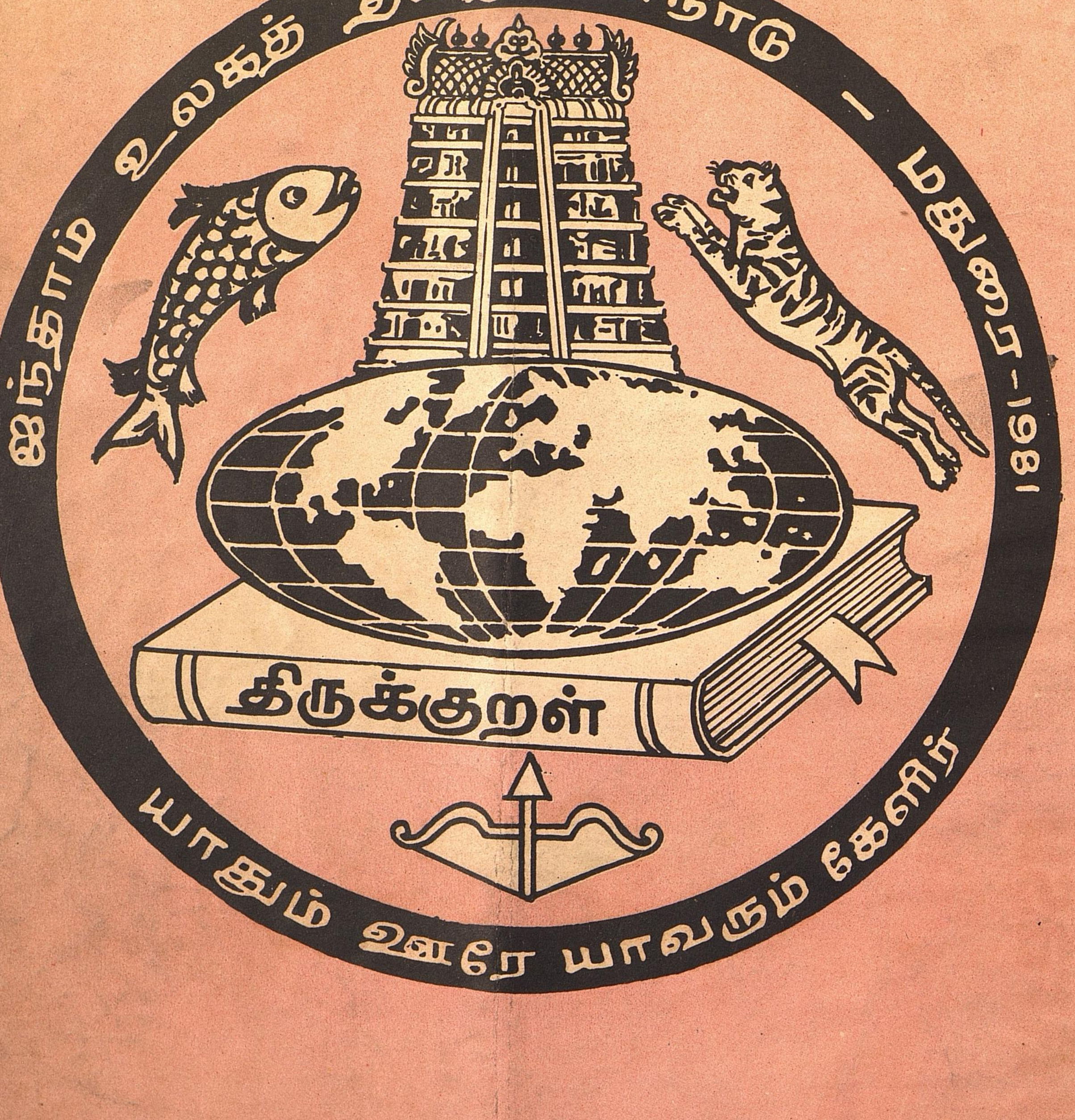
Tamil Arasu

Jan. 1981 50 Ps.


ஐந்தாம் உலகத் தமிழ் மாநாடு — மதுரை 1981
திருக்குறள்
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Tamil Arasu

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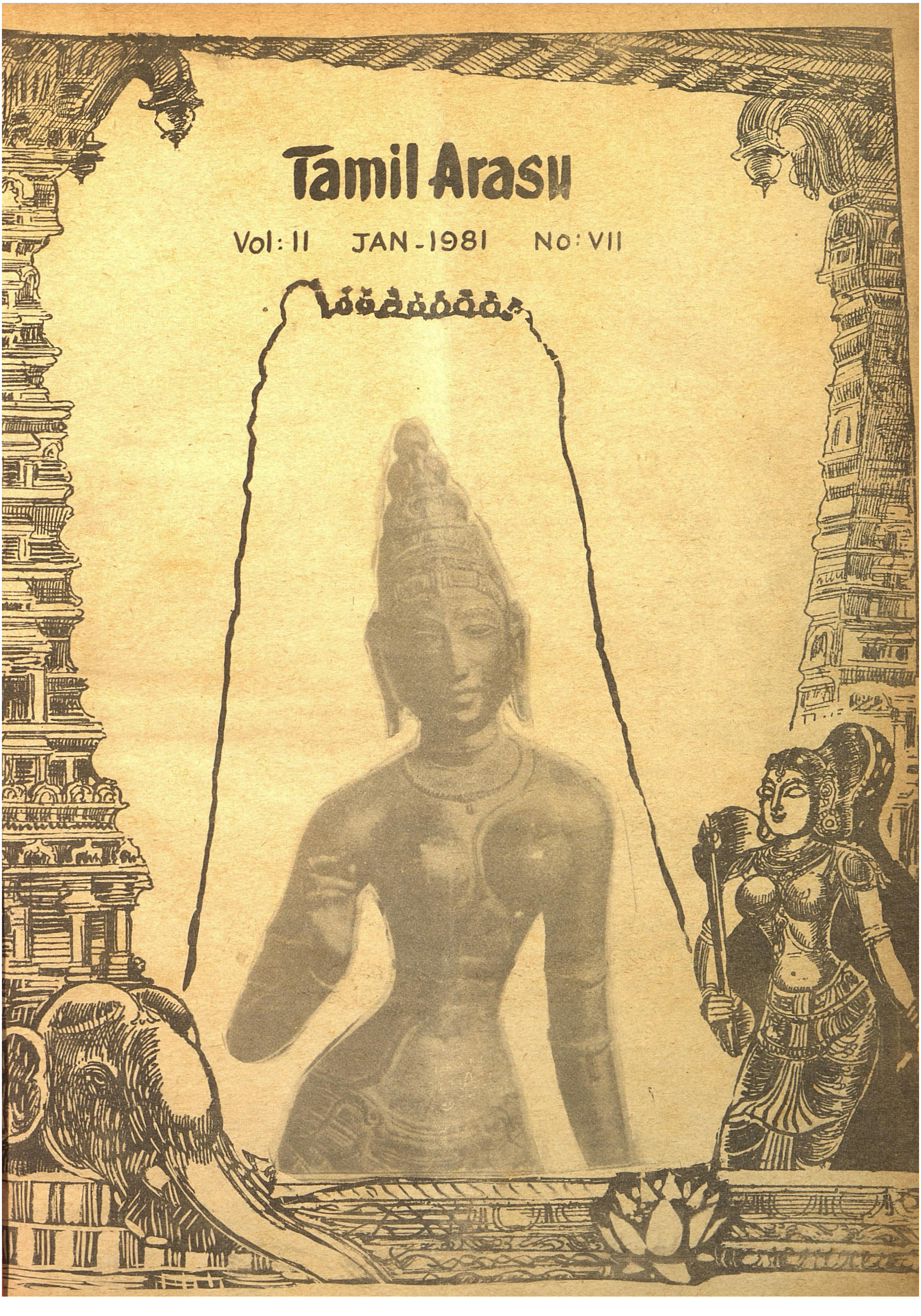
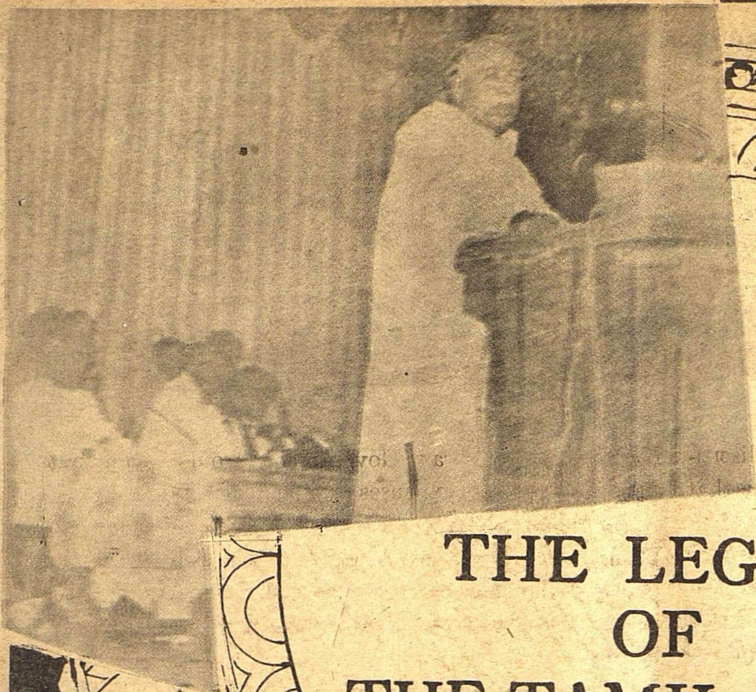




THE LEGACY OF THE TAMIL PEOPLE

—PERARIGNAR ANNA

As one unconnected with research of any sort, especially in Tamil literature or language, I plead my inability to offer you any new suggestion, either for acceptance or rejection.

The discussions at seminars during the past few days have been carried on in a lofty and noble manner and the papers presented at the seminar and the discussions that followed them will make the people think along new lines and find out the truth in matters connected with their languages. Tamil has a vitality, a fertility, and adaptability and versatility unequalled by any other language.

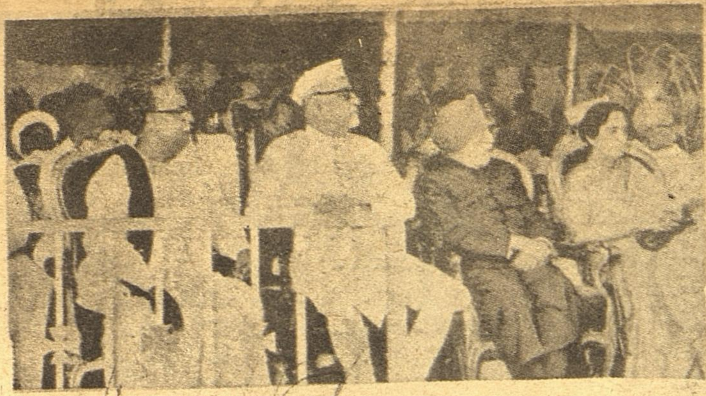
People who had preceded us by centuries have left the legacy of a language that needed no rectification. In research into Tamil, one difficulty might arise. Tamil is an ancient language and everything ancient is bound to be interspersed with something not akin to it, whether it is an idea or a system or anything else. There arrive a stage when the original matter and the imported matter get blended so much as to make it the life work of many research scholars to find out what is original and what is imported.

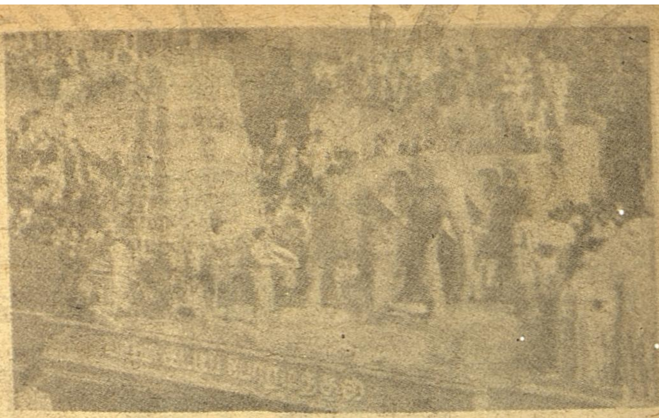
The Legacy of Tamil

I do not say that all that was imported is harmful, but it is good to find out what really is original. Scholars have found Tamil capable of being the vehicle for expressing the most abstruse forms of thought.

There is a feeling that this seminar is far removed from the people. It is true that there is a vast difference between a seminar and a conference. But, people's love for Tamil is so deep and so intense that they like to meet scholars from various countries interested in their language.

There will be another opportunity for a communion of interests between Tamilnad's poets and litterateurs and research scholars of the world. The next World Tamil Conference will see to it that people interested in furthering the cause of Tamil through their writings—prose, poetry, drama—came out with new classics in Tamil.





It will be useful if such writers have intimate discussions with the research scholars. It may be true that these writers might not be in a position to discuss whether this or that Tamil vowel came into use in the third or fourth century B.C. But all the papers read at the seminar should be conveyed to them, and they will help to propagate the ideas in them among the people at large.

It is the ambition of Tamil people to ensure that their language, which has come down the ages as a rarity is accepted by all as one of the richest languages in the world.

Institute for Tamil

I welcome the idea of Mr. S. M. Katre for the establishment of an International Institute of Tamil Studies explained in his paper on "Organisation of an International Institute of Tamil Studies" at the plenary session of the conference. But I wish the institute would not be one giving 'degrees'. Degrees today, are at a discount with the people. People today do not say "Mr. So and So was conferred a degree" but they say "Mr. So and So got a degree". I want the proposed institute to function on the lines of the French Academy and develop into an "Indian or Tamil Academy". It should not become officialised and should not get into the clutches of this or that group.

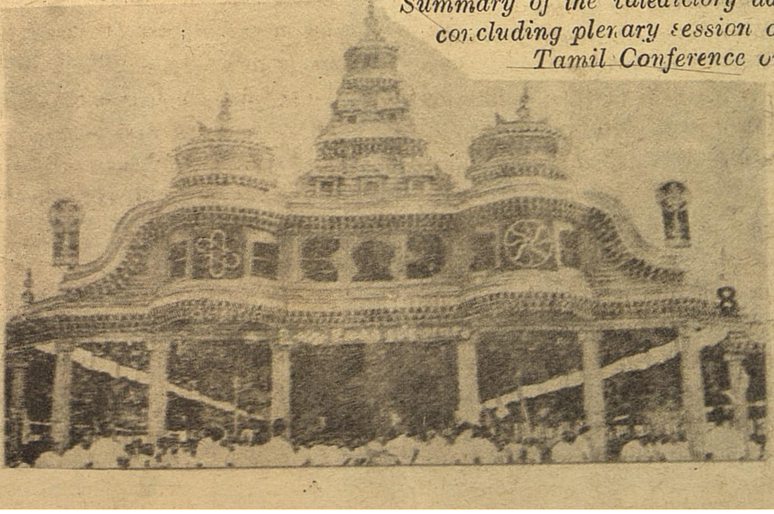
I hope that Mr. Katre would redraft the plan for the institute on these lines. If the institute is located at Madras, the Madras Government would contribute towards meeting expenses of the institute.

For thousands of years it has been the tradition of the Tamils to visit foreign lands. Java, Sumatra and Malaysia have been visited by the Tamils, where they settled only to impart their culture and not to establish aggression.

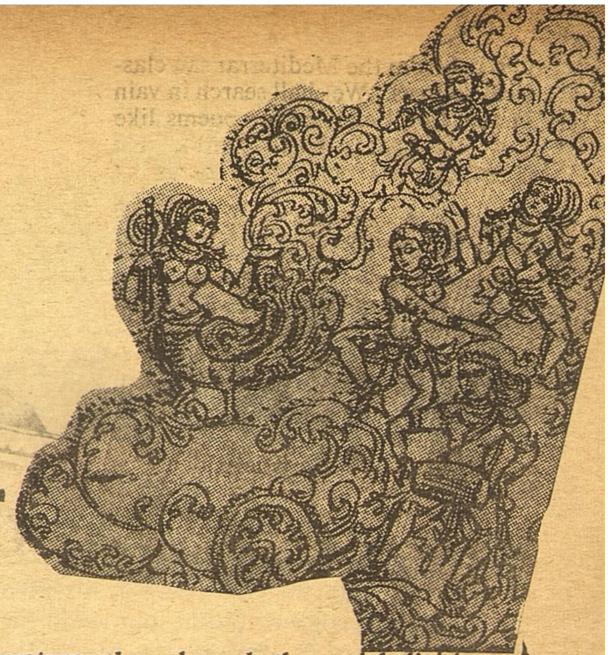
I do not find any single instance of a Tamil "Victory" over other people in distant lands. There is no instance of the Tamils thrusting their language on any people. On the contrary, the Tamils always waited at the threshold to welcome those who want to learn Tamil. We are very proud of our language—rightly proud—but not to the detriment of other languages or to destroy the affection others have for their languages. The foreign Tamil scholars will on returning home, tell their people "Here (Tamilnad) is a country rich in language, rich in literature, and catholic in its views—a country where 2,000 years ago it was proclaimed, 'every country is my country and all humanity are our kinsmen'."

Tamil people today reiterate that ancient affirmation. Here is a people affectionate and almost docile and always prepared to give of their best to good causes—a people who, however, is vigorous and watchful to see that their language and their way of life are not menaced; and if and when there comes a stage when there is real danger to their language and way of life the Tamils will get into a fury of a very great order, "which no power on earth can stand".

Summary of the valedictory address delivered at the concluding plenary session of the Second World Tamil Conference on 10-1-68.



THE HUMANISTIC CONCEPT OF NATURE



Xavier S. Thani Nayagam

Humanism is a philosophy and an attitude which considers man, his nature and his work as the Central themes of history, literature and art. It is an outlook and an attitude which fully sympathises with man and seeks to understand man.

Humanism loves the creations of men, namely towns and cities. The description of South Indian sea-ports and inland capitals made in the Tamil classics reveal town-planning on an extensive scale, with due attention to streets, to parks, to division into quarters, and to the general beauty and architecture of buildings, the prominent ones among which are said to be of the standardised and conventional seven - storey type.

I wonder if in any other literature, if even in the literature of peoples of a city culture, a city is used as the term of comparison for a lady. Such a simile however is very common in ancient Tamil literature. When a poet wished to express the abundance and resource of joy and pleasure that a man derives from the woman whom he has married, or whom he wishes to marry, he can think of no better simile than a city which in its own way is full of abundance and resource, and where every sense may be gratified. You remember Lewis Mumford in his Culture of Cities.

"Through its complex orchestration of time and space, no less than through the social division of labour, life in the city takes on the character of a symphony: specialised human aptitudes, specialised instruments, give rise to sonorous results which, neither in volume nor in quality, could be achieved by any single piece."

A city was also the symbol of beauty and hence the beauty of woman was also compared to the beauty of a city.

"Rich and resourceful is she like New York of the Americans" or "Meet me with all your virtues, London-like" may sound very strange to modern ears, but that is exactly what the ancient Tamil poets said with Tamil cities and towns as their terms of comparison. They chose cities and towns of historical importance or cities and towns which were prosperous and of greatest profit to king and people, and often the mention of a town situated in a certain kingdom was a graceful manner of paying a compliment to its sovereign. Women were often said to be as pretty or as resourceful.

"Meet me" says a lover, "with your several Tondi-like virtues", Tondi being the great sea - port on West coast, the Tyndis of Ptolemy. Thus nearly every famous town or city of old has been pressed into service as a term of comparison in a lover's language.

The Tamil idealised city life, but this idealisation of city life they made quite compatible with love of Nature. It was a love of Nature which was different from the love of Nature of the Greeks and the Latins, and different from that European and English literary tradition of Nature

derived from the Mediterranean classical sources. We shall search in vain in the Tamil classics for poems like those of Theocritus or Vergil. No Bucolics are there as poems of escape from brutal reality singing of idealised herdsmen; no Georgics which professedly deal with aspects of agriculture; no poems exclusively on the Moon or River, or the spring. The poetry of the Tamils places man and human emotion at the centre and Nature as the setting in which man lives and loves.

The first characteristic which strikes the student of Nature in Tamil poetry is the resource of the poets of old and the manner in which the poets have utilised the terrain which was available to them. The five-fold division of land is perhaps applicable to the world at large, but it was a reality within the limits of Tamilakam, between Comorin and Venkadam. Such a division based on physical geography could not have been possible in the Indo-Gangetic Plain or in Ceylon, because the land does not allow of such a division. The poet writting from Nagapury or from Pataliputra would have to traverse several hundred miles, and to kingdoms very different from his own before coming to the seashore and neital tracts, but here within the Tamil country were available the mountain ranges of the Western ghats and the Palni hills, the rocky hilly land of Salem and Coimbatore, the Mullai tracts of Chettinad, the alluvial Plains watered by the Kaveri and the Vaihai, the long broken coastline of the Eastern and Western coasts and the backwaters of Malabar. Here was enough diversified terrain for poetic adventure.

Victor Laprade in a work published in the last century regarding the concept of Nature among ancient peoples observes that it has varied amongst such peoples as those of Northern Indian and those of Greece. In Northern India, the vast Himalayan range, the broad plains which seem to have no horizon, watered by rivers which in their expanse seems to have no shores which limit them, were instrumental in creating the sense of the infinite and the sense of wonder at natural phenomona which are characteristc of early Vedic poetry. Man he says, was faced with this Infinite on all sides. Infinity seemed to overwhelm him and crush him. Greece, on the other hand, is example of another kind of landscape which, engenders quite a different reaction to Nature. Greece is a small diversified country with not too dense a vegetation. Its rivers flow placidly through meadows, and its pine clad promontories look out on the many islanded Aegean. Its sky is clear and blue; its coast curves into innumerable gulfs; its rivers are small and its hills are low. There was nothing to awe the Greeks. In such a country, argues Laprade, man was free to evolve a spirit of independence, or conquest and of liberty.

In the Tamil country, however much the climate or the landscape may have changed, the sense of infinity was very much less. To the Tamil poet, it is the ocean which is awe inspiring and mysterious. The heights are mysterious, not because they are unconquerable but because they are thickly wooded, and contain deep caverns and gloomy groves.

Early Tamil poetry is not conspicously religious; it does not theologise Nature as does Sanskrit poetry. Its main preoccupation is with Man as a member of small closely-knit group and small kingdoms. Further, the sea mysterious as it was beacuse of the sense of the unknown which it endangered, was sufficiently navigable. The Tamil coastline included several sheltered harbours, and backwaters on the West Coast. When the west Coast was not safe, the East Coast provided safe anchorages as at Arikamedu or Korkai. The Periplus Maris Erythraei and Ptolemy's Geography mention numerous harbours located along the southern Indian coast. Navigation and seapower became characteristic of the Tamil Kingdoms.

Nature was therefore, not so awe-inspiring as to be divinised and theologised. Instead it merely became the background, and provided the stage and the scenery for man The concept of nature was fundamentally humanistic and anthropocentric as were the culture and the poetry of the earlier period.

The background of Nature is so constructed that every aspect of Nature evident to the senses, serves to bring into relief the central human emotion or sentiment which is the the motif of the poem. Thus in Mullaippattu for instance, after the description of the queen in the palace and the king in his encampment, the pastoral landscape is drawn as the background for the horses and chariot whose sound brings joy to the forlorn queen.

Similarly, in poem 41 of Akananuru the central emotion is disquietude at the possibility that the beloved suffers because of his separation - "how fareth it with my beloved?"-

"Darkness yet lingering Dawn. Buffaloes are at large, swarms of bees resound around the branches of the Murukku, aflame with dense clusters of unfolding buds.

"Ploughmen drive their teams through the fields and into the orchards of cloddy earth; all the air with trained oxen's clear urge doth resound; and the stumpy glebe breaks beneath their furrow. The wood itself is bedecked with the bouquets on yonder trees.

"In this the eye's festive hour, how fareth it with my beloved? When ignorant of my parting, she was in bloom; now forlorn, is such her grief that her shoulders slim? - She my beauteous brunette, with beauty spots like leaves on which hath flowed honey from cool, scented flowers, haunts of gossamer-winged bees."

The sights and sounds of the break of day in the fields are described merely to raise the question "how fareth it with my beloved?"

In the two examples cited above, the circumstances of their awaiting the return of their husbands could

have been stated without bringing in Nature or Pathetic fallacy could have been introduced to produce emotional reaction. Instead, the natural phenomenon of the season and of the hour of days are described as they affect the human person.

In these poems the entire global situation is introduced. The poems show the advantages which poetry has over other Fine Arts. No painter could have depicted this scene with effect. If he had portrayed in colour the exact dimness of the (வைகு புலர் விடியல்) and the (மைபுலம்) his painting would yet not reveal the other features of the landscape; he would not be able to reproduce the sounds of the farmers in the field and the hum of the bees; his canvas could not include the landscape and the details of the home of the parted lover. The poet works with a medium which brings into play greater and more responses of the human person.

There is no need to modify the poem as palai; one should consider it merely as a poem. I am sure the poet when he wrote it or sang it, did not say to himself that he was going to write a palai poem; else he would have used other figures and another landscape. When we throw off the shackles imposed on us by commentaters and codifiers, we interpret the poem with a freshness and a freedom which introduce to us new dimensions of criticism. The spontaneity and the naturalness of the poet's impulses become far more evident without commentaries and glosses.

We are in some ways nearer to the spirit of the poet than were the commentators. They were nearer in point of time, but they interpreted the poets according to the restrictions of textual criticism prevailing in their time. A great amount of historical data and new critical apparatus are available to us which were not available to them. The classics have a meaning for every new generation and every new epoch; they have to be reacquired and reinterpreted for every new period and I wonder if we who interpret the classics for this generation have contributed our share to the human experiencing of our classics.

The seasons of the year, and the hours of the day were so used along with the five-fold division of the landscape to demonstrate the changing effects of Nature. The changes produced by the different seasons are not so great in Tamil Nadu as in Northern India where are prevalent extremes of heat and cold. It is cold in the Ritusambara; it is not half as cold in the Nedunalvadai there is the spring of the Kalittogai but it is not as full of new sights and sounds as the spring in the Ritusamhara. The seasons as depicted in the poetry of Vergil or of James Thompson depict the changes brought about by the different seasons from snow to spring, to summer and autumn and how human life has change and variety. The variety which the poet of a temperate and colder zone obtained from the seasons, the Tamil poet obtained by utilising the sources of different landscapes and the changes visible in the different months of the year and the hours of the day. If we commend an artist or an architect for using to most advantage the economy, the space and the material at his command we are also logical in commending the resource with which the good earth has been made to respond to the poetic impulse by the Nature poets of the Tamil country.

In other literatures, it was not incumbent on the poet to make the minute study of Nature, of flora and fauna and the changing colours of the sky and the sea as was enjoined

on the Tamil poet by necessity of poetic convention.

Though the study of Nature was compelled by poetic convention, the resulting poetry was not greatly conventional and the descriptions of Nature were not conventional. This was the great success of the Tamil poets that within a framework of convention they were able to create a spontaneous and refreshing poetry of Nature. The appeal to the senses is strong in Sangam poetry. Nature in her wild uncultivated beauty in the mountains the sweet scents and sounds in the fields and meadows, the tang of the salt on the seaside and the dry parchaed leaves in the summer are felt with a fidelity and a propreiety which a thousand repetitions do not pall or obfuscate. One might follow the descriptions of landscape, or of a single flower like the kantal (gloriosa superba) to realise the keen observation of the poets. The kantal has been compared to hands joined in prayer or to lights lit at twilight; its petals to flames, to pieces of broken bangles, to a snake's tongue; and its sagging leaves to the walk of drunken men.

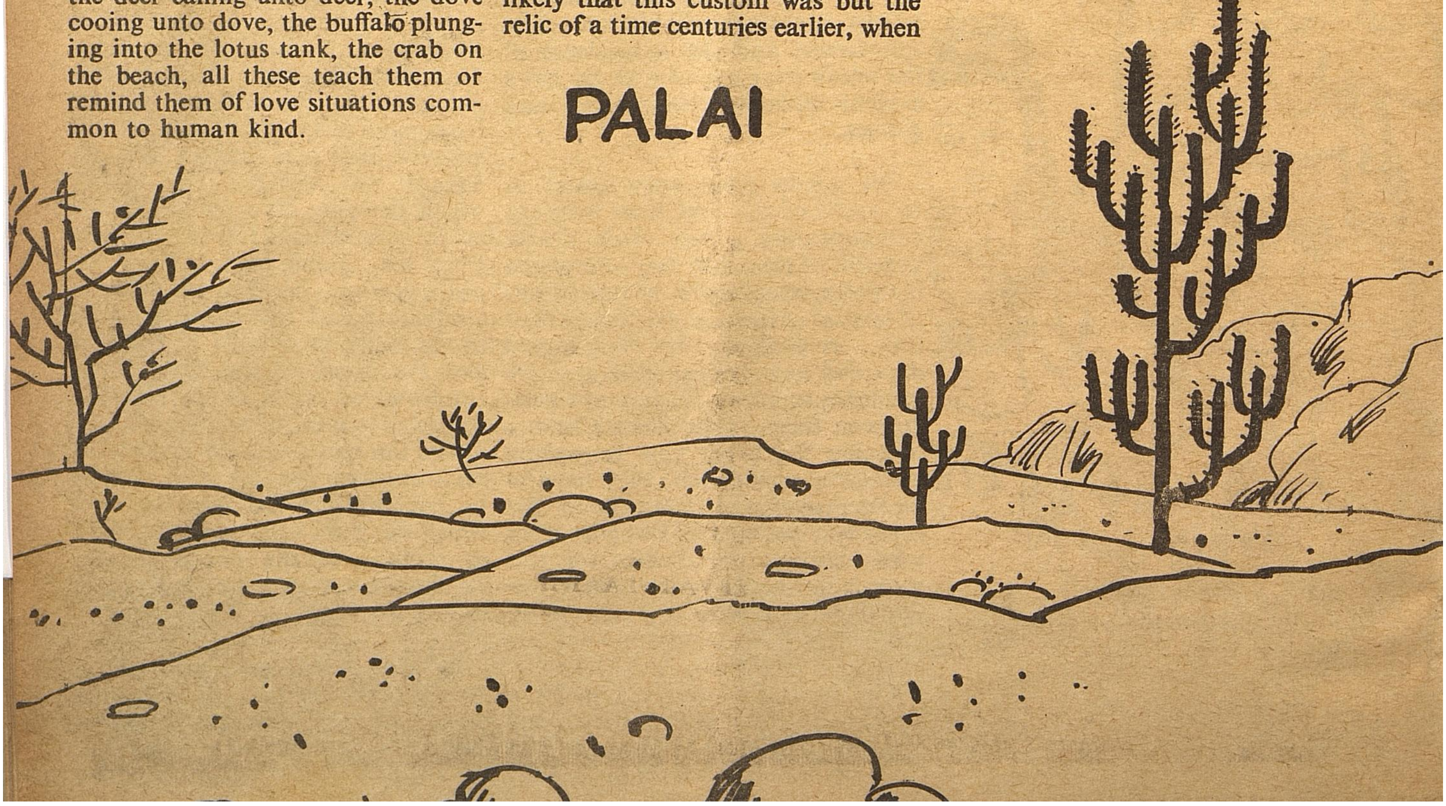
From the animals and the birds and their reactions the Tamil poets learned wisdom. The lovers recall their own course of love when they observe the behaviour of animals and of birds. The elephant that strokes with its trunk the back of its mate or helps it to feed on bamboo shoots, the deer calling unto deer, the dove cooing unto dove, the buffalo plunging into the lotus tank, the crab on the beach, all these teach them or remind them of love situations common to human kind.

Since the earliest Tamil poetry which has come down to us is the product of a highly civilized period and the result of centuries of a well-established culture, it is not surprising that its interpretation of Nature does not contain the simple or the utilitarian appreciation as a prominent characteristic. Lines do occur which express simple joy at the coolness of water, the pleasures of shade and bower, child-like joy at the sight or the use of flowers, lines do occur when the material beauty of the universe is expressed with the freshness of Chaucer and the keen observation of a Vergil or Tennyson, but these lines are never without relation to man. However, in Tamil poetry occur certain conventions which are the remains and echoes of a very primitive and distant age when there was more of the immediate contact with Nature. What was actually a mode of life, later became a custom, and finally crystalised into a hallowed poetic convention which was followed in poetry even when the custom became obsolete.

A lover is depicted, for instance, in ancient poetry as presenting his beloved with garments of leaves, or of garments interwoven with leaves and flowers, to be worn round about the waist over whatever clothes she may wear. Such leafy garments were also given as gifts on cercemonial occasions or as symbols of friendship and hospitality and worn in days of social rejoicing. It is likely that this custom was but the relic of a time centuries earlier, when cotton fabrics were unknown and the primitive Tamil folk covered themselves only with leaves. There are also references to the ritual of marriage taking place under the spreading shade of a vengai tree in full bloom. There are, on the other hand, indications that the wedding ritual at this time was performed under a temporary hall erected in front of the house. This mode of marriage under a flowering vengai is just a poetic convention, but a convention that points out to an earlier period when life was more primitive, and trees were the actual temples and halls of the populatios, and when marriages did actually take place under arboreal shades. Husking paddy and other cereals are said to be done in the open with the hallows that Nature has made in rocks as mortars, the tusks of elephants or sandal wood branches as pestles. At the time of the composition of the poem the Tamils had mortars and pestles in their homes, but in depicting Nature's mortars and costly pestles, the poet seek to embellish a common scene by presenting closer touch with Nature and with premitive life.

From Puram poetry too like illustration may be given. According to the literary conventions of Tolkappiyam, the first stage of war is cattle lifting. This again is a remiscence of earlier society when cattle was the

PALAI



chief wealth of Tamil chiefs and when cattle-lifting was the predominant cause of warfare between clans and settlements. But later poetry treated of cattle-lifting as a preamble to war even when there was actually no cattle-lifting.

A surprising evidence for the earlier contact with Nature, is not merely the use of leaf-garments, but also

the names of the ornaments of Tamil women, which recall the time when rolls of strips of the palmyrah leaf were used as ornaments for the ear and the branches of creepers, were entwined about the arms -
The names of the ornaments are the names of leaves, or creepers, or flowers, as for example:

The Tamils made the desert bloom. They have the distinction of being, perhaps, the only people in history who, while not being desert dwellers, made poetry bloosom in the desert, and better poetry than what other regions inspired. The Arabs have had to sing of the desert by force of circumstances, but the Tamil sang of it through choice, and located in Nature's dreariest places the dreariness of soul. Poems with the motif of separation of lovers have the desert as the background, and these poems demonstrate a wonderful resource on the part of the poets who could use the desert to such great advantage.

The opposite in Puram poetry to Kurinji was Vetci and due to early and primitive association, meant the initial stage of warfare, forays and frontier raids made for the purpose of cattlelifting. Vetci is the name of a flower again indigenous to the mountain region, the ixora coccinea, and cattle-lifting came to be designated by this name, because the Tamil warrior adorned themselves with wreaths and garlands of these red flowers whenever thay set out on cattle raids.

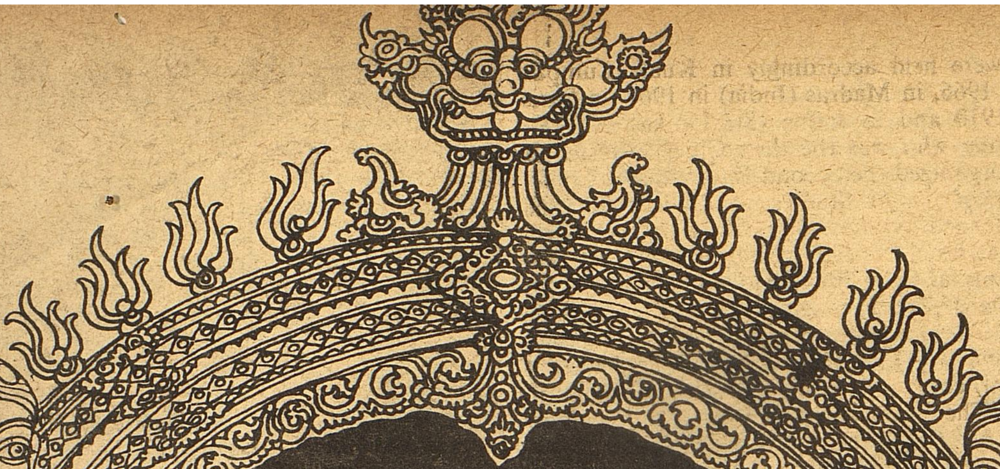
In fact each strategic movement, or aspect of war, had its own particular flower after which the movement was named. The garland indicated the character of the undertakings, and the feelings of those engaged in them. A verse of later epoch says that the solidiers setting forth decorated with red ixora garland on their heads seemed as if the rosy evening sky were moving.

Commenting on the use of flowers by the ancient Tamils for warfare, Dr. Pope observers: 'This is to us a novel form of the language of flowers. These garlands were intended to strike terror into the eyes of the opposing hosts, and to some extent supplied the place of military uniform. The armies of Europe have never been unmindful of the moral effect of the solidier's head-dress; though it would be a noval experience if our troops went forth it was like a marching garden of flaming and fragrent flowers." The author of Pattinappalai, describing Karikalan on the battle field decked with appropriate flowers and leaves, compares the king to a hillock overgrown with shrubs.

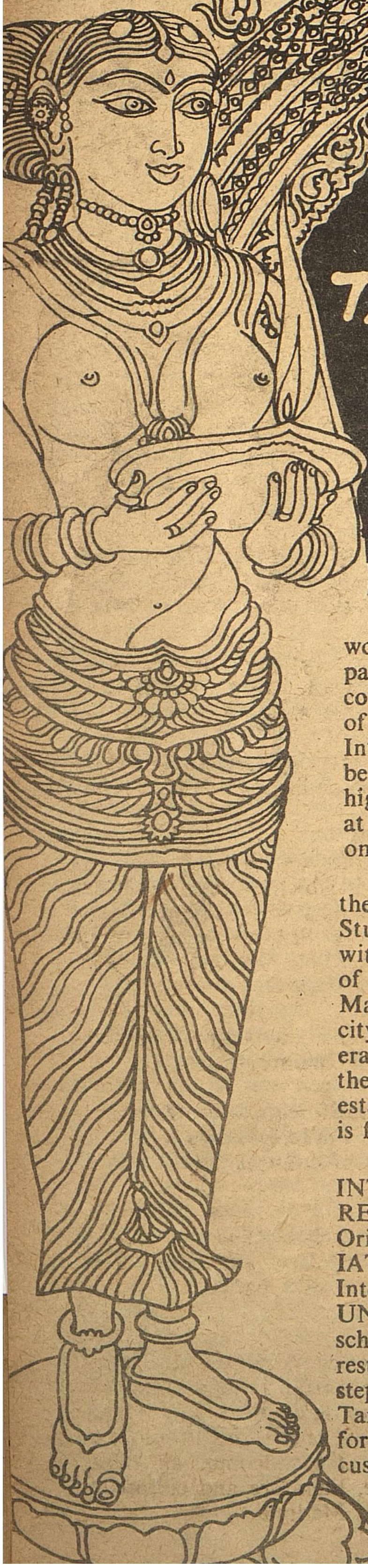
The choice of the regional trees and flowers shows that there was graciousness and taste in the lives of the ancient Tamils.

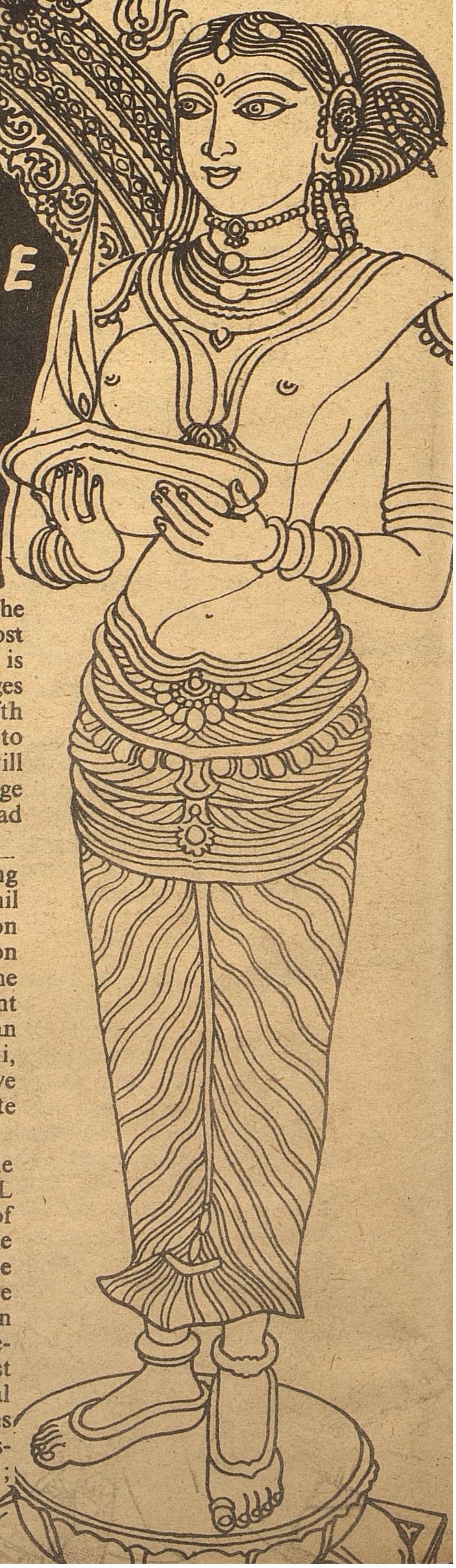
Since a minute and accurate study of Nature was prescribed to the Tamil poet of the Sangam age, we find the poetry of that age very faithful to Nature. Stopford Brooke observes in his study of 'Naturalism in English Poetry'; There were two great subjects of poetry; the natural world .... and human nature. When poetry is best, most healthy, most herself, she mingle together human nature and Nature, and the love of each. Human nature is first in poetry and Nature sceond but they must be together, if the poetry is to be great and passionate, simple and perceptive, imaginative and tender. It is a terrible business for poetry when it is wholly empolyed on man, or wholly employed on Nature. In either case the poetry becomes thin, feeble, unimaginative.' incapable of giving impulse or bringing comfort." Stopford Brooke might have spoken of ancient Tamil poetry in these words, for the happy combination runs through all Sangam literature.

The Sangam poets did not confine their poetry to a special locality. They treated all classes of men and women from all the regions they knew. Though their aham poetry deals with the ideal and heroic, though they talt the best of a type as hero and heroien, a chief and the daughter of a chief they are always conscicious of the fact in the exuberance of love, every lad is a king and every lass a queen. A study of landscape as was enjoined on the Tamil poets meant also a study of the occupations and lives of the people who were indigenous to every region and landscape. There fore they did not treat only of kings and queens, cities and palaces. They found poetry in the fishers' lowly huts and in the dewellings of mountain peoples. The fisher-women waiting for the fishing boats with the days haul, or the fisher-children watching the fish being dried, the shepherds with their flocks, the lowly at their work, came in for as much poetry as the wealthy heroineof a mountain chief wandering over the hills gathering flowers with a number of maids to attend upon her. Even when they sang of kings or sang to kings, they pleased their hearers most, not by describing the palace, but by describing the people that were privileged to live under kings protection. It was certainly Humanism of a Universal kind.



5th WORLD TAMIL CONFERENCE





K. DIRAVIYAM, I. A. S.,
Second Secretary to Government &
Chief Coordinating officer
V World Tamil Conference.

Tamil is the oldest of the living languages in the world. It has wide affinities with languages in most part of the world and if the hypothesis of Lemuria is correct, it would not be surprising if all the languages of the world can be traced back to Tamil. The Fifth International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies to be held from January 4th to 10th, 1981 at Madurai will highlight the glory and splendour of Tamil, a language at once classical and modern with a hoary past spread only thousands of years.

The Government of Tamil Nadu are hosting the Fifth International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies at Madurai during July 1981 in colloboration with the I. A. T. R. a member of the International Union of orientalists, an organ of the UNESCO and the Madurai-Kamaraj University. Madurai is an ancient city where the three Tamil Sangams of the pre-Christian era are reported to have flourished and where Kannaki, the heroine of Silappathikaram is reported to have established that denial of justice, even if not deliberate is fatal to a king.

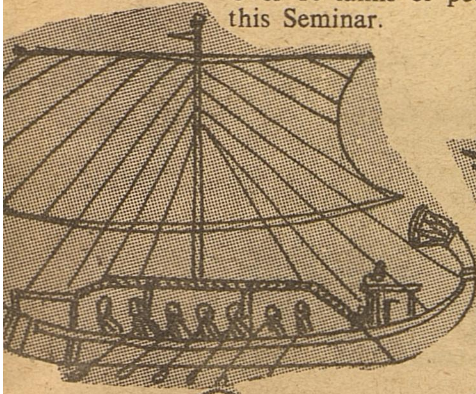
Professor Xavier S. Thani Nayagam founded the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TAMIL RESEARCH. At the XXVII International Congress of Orientalists held in Ann Arbor (U. S. A.) in 1967, the IATR was unanimously elected as a member of the International Union of Orientalists, an organ of the UNESCO. With a view to establishing contacts between scholars in different parts of the world who were interested in Tamil Studies, the IATR decided, as a first step to convene once in 2 or 3 years an International Tamil Conference giving such scholars opportunities for submitting research papers and participating in discussions with other scholars in the same or related fields;

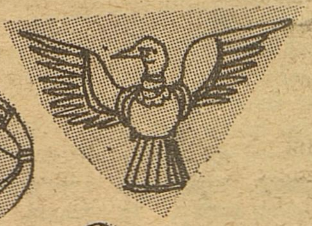
Conferences were held accordingly in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) in 1966, in Madras (India) in 1968, in Paris (France) in 1970 and in Jaffna (Sri Lanka) in 1973. Perarignar Anna who was the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu organized the Second International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies at Madras in 1968 which was attended by about 500 delegates from thirty different countries. At the invitation of President Senghor of Senegal, who is a linguistic scholar in his own right, the IATR has agreed to hold the Fifth International Tamil Conference in Dakar (Senegal) towards the end of 1977. The Conference convened at Dakar (Senegal) could not be held due to elections in that country. The Government of Tamil Nadu willingly accepted to host the Fifth International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies at Madurai, the Cultural capital of Tamil Nadu.

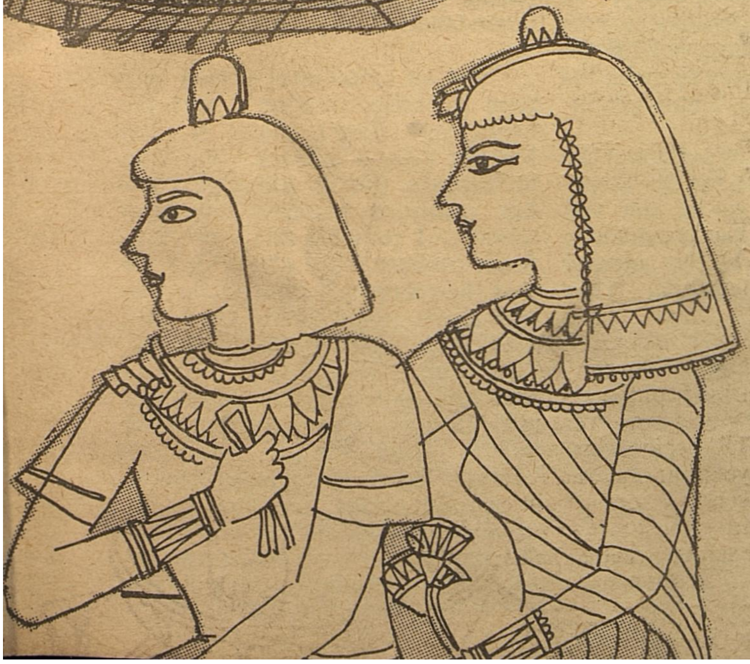
The Government of Tamil Nadu are making elaborate arrangements to conduct the Conference in a grand manner. Over 500 scholars from all over the world are participating and presenting papers on Tamil Studies. The various activities of the Conference are discussed below :

(*a*) Academic seminar at the Madurai Kamaraj University in which the scholars from all over the world will present research papers and discuss on them ;

(*b*) Public Conference where in Pattimanram (Debate) Kavi Arangam (Poets' forum) and Special lectures by popular Tamil scholars will be conducted at the specially erected pandal called 'Moovendhar Arangam". Over 10 lakhs of people will participate in this Seminar.







(*c*) Cultural Exhibition depicting ancient Tamil culture, literary scenes and the grant of Tamil Civilization over the ages.

(*d*) A colourful pageantry depicting ancient Tamil culture, both of civilization and literary schemes.

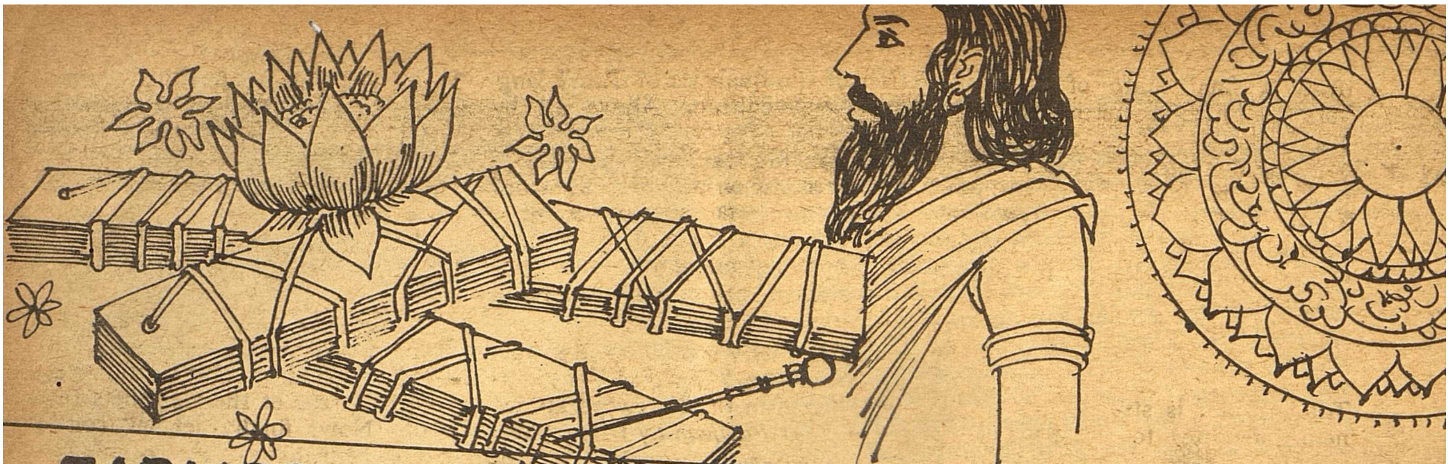
(*e*) Cultural programmes on all the seven days of the Conference in which the famous artistes, dancers, instrumentists will perform to the foreign delegates as well as the people at home. Besides this Folk arts will also be an important item.

(*f*) A colourful Souvenir containing over 100 research papers and paintings.

(*g*) Cultural tour; All the foreign delegates attending the Conference will be taken on a cultural tour to the places of cultural importance in Tamil Nadu.

The Government of Tamil Nadu have also decided to erect Statues to Tamil Scholars at Madurai City in connection with V World Tamil Conference.

The Government have also constructed five "Thoranavayils" at the five important entrances to the Madurai City as a permanent memory to the Conference. It is no doubt that this Conference will enrich the Tamil language, literature and culture. I welcome all who interested in Tamil language, literature and culture to this Conference to be held at Madurai.



EARLIEST REFERENCES TO TAMIL

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The chief intention of this brief note is to draw the attention of scholars to the earliest references pertaining to Tamil available in ancient Tamil works. This is necessary not merely because of its interesting nature but of its historical value. Again this is essential not only to assess the antiquity of the language but also to understand the basis of appreciation of the love of mother-tongue by the Tamils of pre/post Sangam age.

And it has to be mentioned here and now that even Sanskrit does not make any reference to Tamil as such. Nor does Tamil about Sanskrit. This is indeed very surprising.

Tolkappiyam (c. 700 B.C.), the earliest Tamil grammar in/of Tamil is known for its uniqueness in treating not only the Grammar of the language (of sounds, words, syntax and meanings of words etc.) but also of *literature* itself.

In this ancient Tamil grammatical work, Tolkappiyar, who is considered to be more comprehensive than even Panini because of the above-mentioned speciality of treatment of the grammar of literature itself, has only three references to Tamil which are of importance because of their antiquity and unambiguous nature. In the Sutra that occurs in the first part itself of Tolkappiyam, that speaks of the grammar of sounds and their behaviour Tolkppiyar clearly records the fact of the existence of the word Tamil in a very homely way. This itself establishes the truth that the word 'Tamil' was in popular usage meaning the language. Such seems to be not the case with Sanskrit in Panini !

The second and third references of Tolkappiyam to Tamil are found in part Two, chapter nine, while dealing with the classification of Tamil vocabulary. Here the significant reference to Tamil is in the context of its home-land. It has also to be borne in mind that Tolkappiyar's two references here in part-2: chapter-9 : Sutrams-2 & 4 to 'Tamil' clearly clinches the issue that the earliest name for the home-land of Tamil/s was well-known as Tamil-Akam or Tamil-nadu which are current expressions even today. In this context it is imperative to note that even before Illangovadikal the word 'Tamil' is chosen to mean the Tamil land and the Tamil people.

This conclusion of our about the earliest nomenclature for the home-land of the Tamils get all and full support of literary internal evidences from the Tamil works that succeed Tolkappiyam immediately. They are as follows :

(1) Tamilakam—Purananuru : 168-18, Patirruppattu—Pathikam II: 2-5, Silappadikaram : 3-37, (2) Tamil nadu—Silappadikaram : 10-58 23-Katturai-15, 25-165, 25-171 29-Uraippattu madai.

It will be beneficial to consider the meanings of these two words—Akam and Nadu in this context as found in the Tamil lexicon.

Akam :—Inside, Mind, Sexual pleasure, Breast, Agricultural tract, House, Place, Ether, Love-theme, Being subordinate, subject An anthology of love-lyrics.

Nadu—v. tr—To seek, enquire after, pursue, To examine, investigate To desire earnestly, To know, understand, To resemble, To measure, To reach, approach, To think, consider, To scent as dogs,

v. intr—To be measure,

n—Country, district, province, Locality, situation, Earth, land, World, Kingdom, State, Rural tracts Open place, room, space, area. Side, region, quarter, A very large number, Agricultural tract.

The above-noted meanings will certainly reveal exhilaratingly the appropriateness of the two words Akam and Nadu in denoting a home-land.

But an intelligent person may raise a tiklish question : why the expression 'Tamil Nadu *as such* has not even a solitary ocurrence in Sangam poetry although Nadu has nearly a hundred references therein. I consider this very significant because I am of the opinion that the concept of a linguistic state or a single united nation must have been very vague in the beginning. And that it should have tried to take firm roots only during the end of the age of Sangam anthologies is evident from the references to 'Tamil Nadu' in Silappadikaram. A specific reason for that might have been the conflict between north & south which is an important aspect of subject-matter dealt in the

third & final canto of Silappadikaram. Further, more references are found in Silappadikaram for contextual reasons wherein Tamil is connected with the meaning of Tamil people (warriors) although such a meaning is readily available in two solitary instances in Sangam anthologies.

Although the absence of the world Tamil in any context in the whole of the special third division of Tolkappiyam is striking, the pertinent references to the patronising famous three-kings of Tamilnadu in an appropriate place and in an odd place like that of the chapter on prosody are interesting.

On the whole 'Tamil' has 51 references in ancient Tamil literature, of which 5 are in Tolkappiyam, 17 in Sangam anthologies, 24 in Silappadikaram and 5 in Manimekalai. This simple statistics will reveal the ascending importance assumed by the word 'Tamil' in the chronological development of the Tamil Society. A close look will also show that the occurrence has distribution of 1 in pattuppattu, 2+1 each in Akananuru & Paripadal and 2+2 Patirruppattu but 7 in Purananuru. To any student of ancient Tamil literature, this raise in the number will certainly convince the contextual need for it namely the subject-matter dealt in Purananuru is about the external public life of the society. This very reason explains the comparatively larger number of occurrences in Silappadikaram and relatively diminished references in Manimekalai.

Now let us briefly and quickly review the nature and significance of the epithets added to the word Tamil in pure and post positions. With regard to this the most significant reference is in the Tolkappiyam text itself wherein the oldest and greatest of Tamil grammarians refers to Tamil as 'Centamil' in a couple of places. 'Cem' is a contraction of the word 'Cemmai'. It will be certainly interesting and useful to know, the meanings of the word 'cemmai' as found in the Tamil lexicon which are as follows.

(1) Redness, ruddiness, (2) Goodness, soundness, good condition, (3) Spotlessness, uprightness, directness, recititude, Fairness, impartiality, (5) Unit, (6) Excellence, eminence, greatness, (7) Fineness, neatness, cleanliness, (8) Beauty, grace, elegance, (9) Moon's descending node (10) Sulphur

Any one can now easily understand and appreciate that of the above-noted meanings seven out of ten (2-8) fit in well for the description of the qualities of Tamil language and culture. Above all by the usage of this *only* epithet in Tolkappiyam for Tamil the positive purity consciousness for Standard Tamil among the ancient Tamils is revealed in a heartening manner although they gave equal importance to Standard spoken word according to Panamparanar himself.

It is surely significant that this epithet-phrase 'Centamil' is pertinently used in the Foreword known in Tamil as *Payiram* by Panamparanar to Tolkappiyam. But the Supreme significance is in the usage of the word 'Iyarkai' in post-position by Panamaparanar which only means that the pre-position epithet 'Cen' should not make any one to misunderstand or to have any misgiving that Tamil language is in anyway unnatural. Unless one realises this deep-meaning of the deliberate use of the word 'Iyarkai' by Panamparanar he will lose the most precious implicit sense of the author of the text about the *nature* of Tamil language. This is also vouchsafed by the very nomenclature given to one of the three-fold classification of Tamil i.e. *Iyartamil*. In this context it will be appropriate to remember the fact that the earliest reference to 'Koduntamil' is only in the Nurkatturai at the end of Silappadikaram.

Next to the epithet 'Cen' we have only a few epithets added to 'Tamil' in Ancient Tamil Literature. Their distribution are as follows :—

Of the above mentioned list of epithets it can be seen that 'Tan', 'Nal' have occurrences only in Sangam anthologies and the rest in the Twin epics only. Of all these 'Nal' appears to be outstanding in tune with the general preference to that by the ancient Tamil poets in all other matters also.

Before we proceed further it will be interesting and instructive to note the various meanings for the epithets Tan, Nal, Ten, Arum, Van, and Ma according to the Tamil lexicon.

Tan—1. Coolness, coldness, 2. Water, 3. grace,

Nal—Good

ten—South, Southern region, Beauty, Charity, Harmony, music, Song, Sweetness, Coconut tree, Right side.

(Arumai — Arum) — Rareness, greatness, Difficulty, Difficulty of attainment, Smallness, minuteness.

(Vanmai-van)—Bounty, liberality, Quality, property, nature, Beauty Truth, Fruitfulness, fertility, abundance, Strength, Praise, reputation, Sirissa.

Ma—greatness, strength.

Ma—Beauty, Blackness/Colour, Paleness caused by love-sickness.

Those who see these meanings of the above noted epithets will have no difficulty in realising the appropriateness of these epithets to Tamil. Now, finally let us conclude by remembering the meanings for the word Tamil itself.

Tamil—Sweetness, melodious - ness, Refined quality, Tamil language being divided into Iyar-ramil, icai-t-tamil, nataka-t-tamil, Tamil literature, Tamil work, The Tamils, The Tamil country.

Although the Tamil Lexicon most unfortunately missess the most significant sense of the word Tamil i.e. love-matter (Akapporul) the earliest reference to this meaning is surely available in the Paripadal text itself (9:25) and also in the colophon of Kurincipattu, one of the ten Idylls. Thus we can find the evolution of the meanings for the word Tamil from that of language to love (life).

The significant reference to Tamil in Cirupanarruppatai (66) that reveals both the anxiety and authenticity of/for the establishment of a powerful centre (Sangam) for Tamil learning has other strong references also in support.

However the elymological root-meaning of the world Tamil is not clear by the old references.

More memorable are the references wherein Tamil is itself used as epithets to the rivers Vaigai and Kaveri of which we get to the latter a reference a reverential clue for the worship of Nature as Mother-goddess also. Probably the earliest reference to Tamil (land including) as Mother-goddess is clearly available in Silappadikaram. So also Manimekalai appears to give the earliest direct reference to Tamil as a subject for *critical* study of its quality.

Thus the various references to Tamil, its land and people reveal that the ancients were not merely vociferous (unlike us, the moderns!) but had the local, national and world visions.

1. Tan	—	Patirruppattu	—	63:9	
		Purananuru	—	35:3	
				51:5	
				198:12	
				Padikam—10	10
		Silappadikaram	—	25:66	
				28:153, 209	
				Padikam—25	
		Manimekalai	—	19:109	
2. Nal	—	Purananuru	—	50:10	1
3. Ten	—	Silappadikaram	—	27:5	
				26:185	4
				10:58	
		Manimekalai	—	25:137	
4. Arum	—	Silappadikaram	—	27:189	1
5. Van	—	Silappadikaram	—	23:63	
				25:158	1
6. Mavan	—	Manimekalai	—	Padikam—97	1

ERRATA

THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL II TAMILNADU

The advertisement released by the Accountant-General's Office, for the year 1979-80, G. P. F. Subscribers Code No. which appeared in October, 1980 issue— "RDN" should be read as "EDN", "FH" should be read as "PH".

The Tamil Tradition

A SYNOPTIC ACCOUNT

Dr.Avvai D. Natarajan

Analysing the theories of Tamil origins, historians have declared that it may be taken as fairly certain that the Tamils were indigenous to South India. The collective impact of the geographical, archaeological, epigraphical, environmental and socio-cultural factors on the richness of the hoary civilization of the autochthonous Tamils is still being studied. This study generally justifies the aforementioned stand. The native people of this land speak the Tamil language, which is perhaps the only instance in history of "an ancient classical tongue having successfully survived as a spoken language for a period over two thousand five hundred years, with its basic structure remaining almost unaltered and intact during this long period."

Tamil is the oldest representative language of the Dravidian family. Its vocabulary and systemized grammar are far more advanced when compared to the other languages of the Dravidian stock. Tamil developed in a mature literature at least a thousand five hundred years before Telugu, and a thousand years before kannada. Upto the tenth century Tamil was the spoken language in Kerala. By applying the subtle branch of modern linguistics called Glottochronology to the major Dravidian language, T.M.Kameswari has arrived at the above conclusion.

Tamil genius was conspicuous not merely in the sphere of language but also in that of literature. Incidentally it may also be added that the ancient script— system of the Tamils as expounded by Tolkappiyar in his outstanding grammar denotes the antiquity of the indigenous system of phonology of the Tamils during the early pre-christian era. It is noteworthy that the scientific evolution of the script covered not only the vowels and consonants in general, but particularly the six nasals as codified in Tolkappiyam. In no other script of any language do we find more than five nasals. The symbol of alveolar nasal (n) in Tamil as to the sixth one, existing right from the Tolkappiyam period is a positive proof for the scientific codification of the phonological system of early Tamils, which is maintained intact till date.

With such a scientific system of writing, the Tamils had evolved an original and outstanding literature, basically touching upon the geographical and emotional aspects of human existence.

The rich civilization of these people, partly urban and partly rural, produced much good poetry. Much of this poetical lore has been irretrievably lost, but some has survived. This survival is a fragment of a fragment for, some of what was reduced to writing has also been lost. It is from this fragmentary survival which exceeds twenty six thousand lines, that we get some glimpses into the life, which men and women led in the Tamil land in those far off days. These speak of villages and cities, cottages and mansions, kings and chieftains, courts and poets, bards and minstrels, merchants and caravans, soldiers and armies, ships and fleets, war and love, dress and jewellery, songs and dances, and arts and crafts. On the whole, the people seemed to have lived joyously, dining well, revelling in singing songs and making love.

The land was but sparsely occupied and there were large tracts of mountain and other regions. There was, however, a fairly large number of villages and hamlets, and cities of importance. A gradation of climato-geographical features was available in the Tamil land from the hills to the sea including jungle, fertile plain and littoral strips. This had made ancient classical authors divide the land into four physico-cultural zones, twining them up with the sentiments of poetic themes and linking them with specific gods. The Palai or the scrub land is not mentioned in Tolkappiyar's classification. There is an implication in some of the Sangam verses that whenever any of the other tinais lost its natural facilities owing to any freak of nature, it fell to the position of Palai, the sandy desert region. Naturally the habits and manners of the inhabitants of these regions varied. Influx of other nationalities and people augmented this population, and the cities grew in size, and developed in culture by contacts with people both from overseas and overland. This aspect has bestowed upon the heritage of Tamilians a dichotomy of high individualism and conservatism, combined with a gracious liberalism.

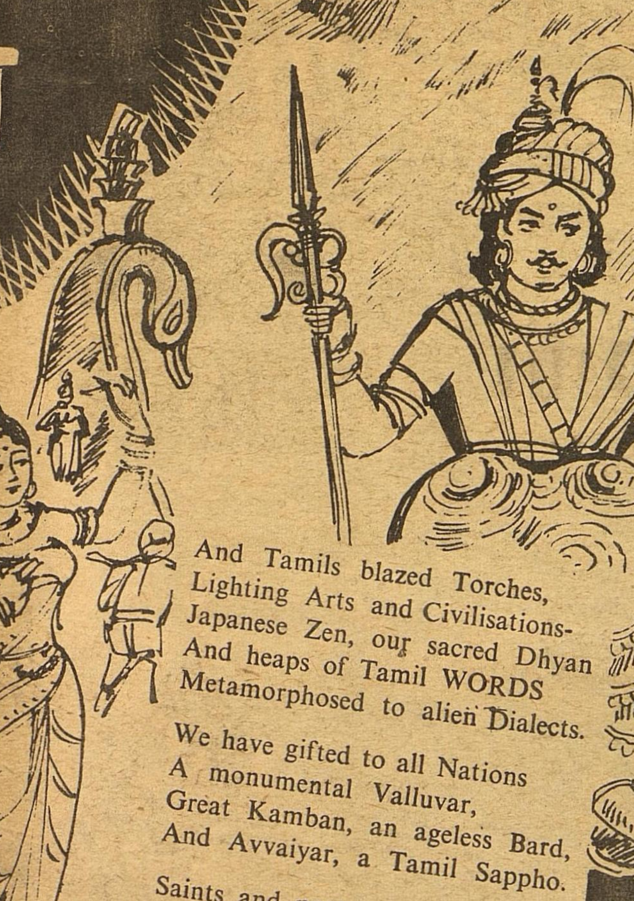
WORLD TAMIL MEET

-KRISHNA SRINIVAS

All beaming lights
From East and West
Are assembled here
With all their zest.
This day we celebrate-
Fingering films of hoary past-
Those years when we Tamils
With fleets of Gods and valiant men
Lay strewn in forlorn Isles-
Growing cults and cultures great,
Tamil tribes roaming pacific Isles
As Malays, Indos, Cathay hordes
And Australasian vagrants
And also walked the streets
Of Rome, Athens, Alexandria
And from silken Samarkand
To cedared Lebanon
And scaled the Peru Peaks, and Inca Mounts
And Walked Atlantean Vasts and Canyons.

Milleniums ago
The Southern Sea you now see
Homed the mighty continent,
LEMURIA, stretching its arms
To Africas and Americas
And gloried Australias.

In Poompuhar and fabled ports
All wealth of Ormus vast
Changed hands with treasured Ind



And Tamils blazed Torches,
Lighting Arts and Civilisations-
Japanese Zen, our sacred Dhyan
And heaps of Tamil WORDS
Metamorphosed to alien Dialects.

We have gifted to all Nations
A monumental Valluvar,
Great Kamban, an ageless Bard,
And Avvaiyar, a Tamil Sappho.

Saints and poets we have galore-
Ramanuja, Ramana, Vallalar,
Sweet Bharathi and Bharathi Dhasan-
Rousing the rage in us to merge
In blaze of awakened Heart-
Alwars and Nayanmars
Our darkness illumine.

What Plato dreamed ages ago
We have in Tamil Nad
An Artist rule our Land:
M.G.R. - our life Star,
Lighting our darkened march
And guiding us to reach
everlasting prosperity-
An Isle of contentment
In a war-torn continent.

Socio—economic life in the Sangam age

Justice P. S. KAILASAM

The socio-economic life of the Sangam age is discernable from the Sangam literature. By Sangam age, the period covered by the 3rd or last Sangam between the 3rd century B. C. and 3rd century A. D. is referred to. The first two Sangams are not taken into account. The first Sangam is reported to have had Lord Siva, Lord Muruga and St. Agastiar as its members and the place where the Sangam was held, Southern Madurai, is believed to have been sub-merged by sea. The second Sangam was in the Pandya country which was also engulfed by the sea.

The three kingdoms which are referred to in the Sangam age are the Chera, Chola and Pandya kingdoms. The territories were governed only by the kings. The kings were held in very high esteem as the God and Protector and it was believed that seeing the king was as good as seeing the God Himself. The monarchy was benevolent and was reported to be just benevolent and humane : the Manu Chola to expiate the anguish of a cow, which was run over by the crown prince, sacrificed his own son. Where the king came to know of the grave injustice done to Koyalan, the Pandya king instantly fell down dead : that they were humane is seen from the story of King Sibi who died to save a bird from a hawk, and Pari who left his own chariot to enable a creeper to climb and flourish. Another chieftain, Pekan, charmed by the beauty of the dancing peacock, covered and protected it from cold by covering it with his own shawl.

The three kingdoms were at war with each other frequently. The king is praised for waging war against neighbour to enable him to reward the many poets who sought his patronage.

There is evidence of trade between the three kingdoms and foreign countries. The people were seafaring and foreign ships came ladden with horses and precious stones. Products from the Tamil countrywere taken to various countries. Puhar and Kaviripumpattinam were important ports. There is evidence of maritime intercourse among the countries from Indonesia to South Africa, India occupying a central position and having a fair share in the sea trade. Foreigners known as Yavanas (Graeco-Roman origin) were employed in the Tamil kingdoms as guards guarding royal palaces and streets in Tamil cities at nights. Yavan women were found in the harems of the Tamil kings. Foreign wines and ornaments wrought with female figures of Yavana manufacture was in great demand.

There were famous cities, such as Puhar, Madurai, Woraiyur, Kanchi and Karur. These cities abounded with temples, palaces and mansions and were surrounded by high ramparts and imposing gateways. The ramparts were surrounded by deep moats full of water. There were several storeyed mansions in the cities. The gateway of Madurai city was high and broad enough

to allow three elephants to enter abreast. It had massive wooden doors supported by storeyed watch-tower on top. The palaces and mansions of merchants and nobles were built of brick and were several storeyed. Some of the buildings were seven storeyed. The tall buildings in cities were compared to peaks of mountains. There were huge temples belonging to Hindus, Jains and Buddhists. The Hindu temples were dedicated to Siva, Vishnu, Devi and others.

The society comprised of kings and nobles at the top advised by Brahmins. They were entertained by poets, musicians, dancers and jesters. There was abundance of necessities of life and the level of culture high. The people enjoyed themselves with rich food consisting of grain, flesh, fish, vegetables, milk etc. They helped themselves to drinks of toddy kept in jars and wines imported in green bottles. A drink of toddy mixed with the juice of sugar-cane and cocoanut water was in great demand.

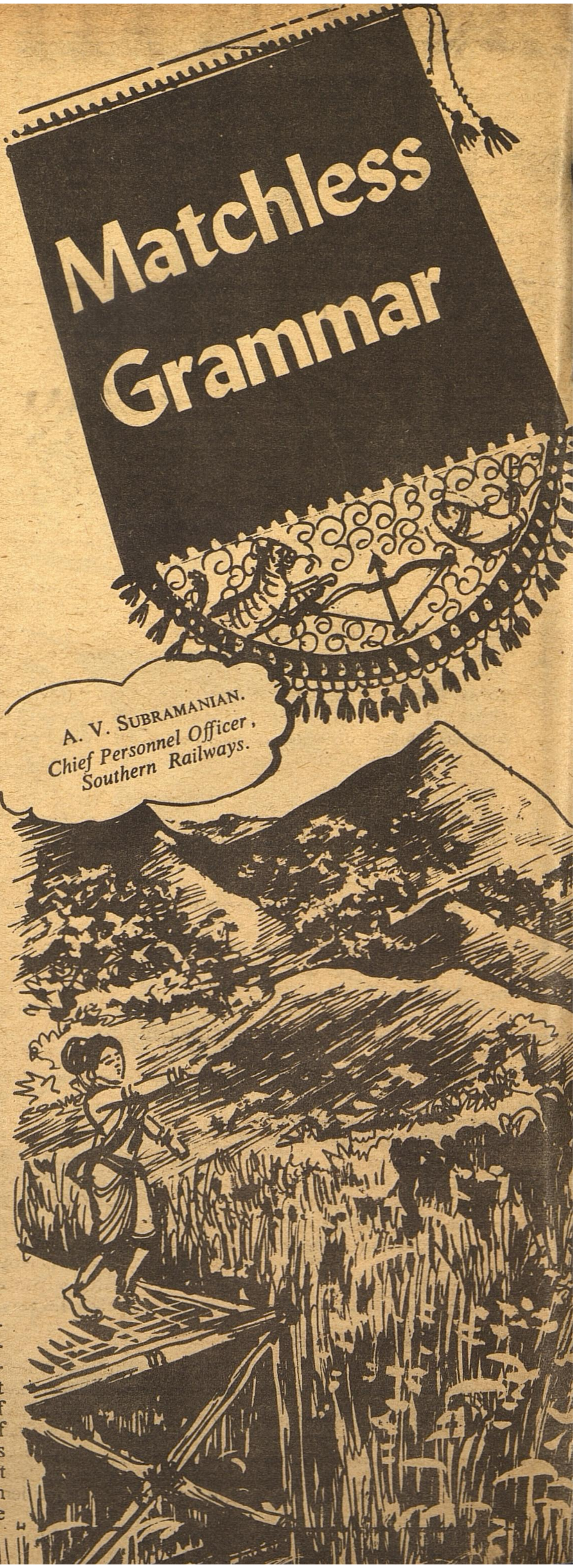
Women were held in great esteem. The practice of Sati was common, particularly among the richer classes. Woman mounted the funeral pyre of her husband with no more concern than if she was entering a tank of cool water for a bath. Widows discarded all ornaments and abandoned good food and led a life of austerity.

The Sangam literature refers to the social life of the Tamils. There is reference to the feasting of relations at a meal of rice and meat before the marriage and the cermonial bathing of the bride by women and the marriage pandal being strewned with fresh sand. Music and worship of Gods and an auspicious day being fixed at the bright half of the month is also mentioned. Several cermonies and rituals were introduced at a later age. Eight forms of marriages are referred to. Mention is made of spontaneous coming-together of men and women and secret marriage as opposed to open alliance with the consent of the parents is also referred to. In the capital cities, there were famous grave yards. The dead were either cremated or cast away and exposed to the elements or animals. Bodies were laid in pits which were dug into the ground and in subterranean cellars. The bodies were also placed inside the burial-urn. The burial-urns were found in different places. The urns are preserved in the Madras Museum and are of great archaeological interest.

The Tamils had from very ancient times developed systems of vocal and instrumental music. An extensive literature about music was prevalent in the Sangam age but unfortunately most of them have been lost. The Tamil literature refers to various kinds of musical instruments and musical compositions. The Tamils spent their spare time in music and dancing. The professional dancers (dancing girls) danced usually during nights and there were well established conventions regarding the time and place when particular tunes should be played. There were mixed dances and the dancing girls of Madurai were reputed to exert their wiles on the rich young men of the city. Mixed bathing parties were also mentioned.

There are references to the art of painting in Tamil literature, the principal colours employed being red, black, white, green and blue.

The socio economic life during Sangam period as depicted in the Sangam literature shares a high developed Society of Tamils about 2000 years ago.



Grammar follows in the wake of literature : this is true everywhere and in Tamil Nadu too the great grammar Tolkappiam is believed to have been composed after the first Tamil Sangam had sponsored great literary works. Thus Tolkappiam which was probably written during the second Tamil Sangam came to be available to the poets of the third Sangam : in this case grammar preceded a big body of literature and for this reason and for the weightier reason of its overwhelming inner worth it exercised a tremendous influence over the works of the third Sangam. Since the oldest literary works in Tamil that have survived today are those composed in the third Sangam period, we can assert that the entire body of Tamil literature bears the influence of this single work of grammar, the Tolkappiam.

Panini the celebrated Sanskrit grammarian came after the vedas had been composed and though Panini's grammar exercises a total control over the use of the Sanskit language, the vedas are outside its scope of influence. From another view point, too, we find that Tolkappiar's influence is wider and deeper than that wielded by Panini ; while the latter confined the scope of his legislation to the field of letters, words, and sentences (corresponding to the field of grammar in the western sense) Tolkappiar devoted one whole book out of the three comprising his work to a detailed consideration of the content of poetry (roughly corresponding to the field of poetics as understood in the west). Thus Tolkappiam legislates not only for the diction but for the subject-matter of poetry as well. It would therefore appear that Tolkappiam has a unique—suzerainty over the literature of the land unequalled by any other single work composed any where in the world.

It would be idle for the present writer even to attempt to outline all or most of the essential features of this great work during the course of a single magazine article. Hence it is proposed to touch upon two most singnificant ideas dealt within it. They have been selected from among a plethora of concepts set forth in the encyclopaedic compilation for their uniqueness, for the amazing scope of their application, for the awareness of the innermost promptings of the human heart which is behind them.

One is the concept of associating the various moods and stages of development of love with some geographically distinct territories. Perhaps Tolkappiar did not innovate this but merely codified and clarified the ideas that are part of a hoary Tamil tradition. Indeed we find Tolkappiar making references to this ancient tradition in quite a few places in his work in words like, " thus it is said " and " so say the scholars." But the world owes the deepest debt to Toklappiar as it has derived all its present knowledge of this great tradition only through his unique work.

The first quality of this that demands, our admiration is that though love has been universally the favourite subject for poets everywhere, this concept of mood-and- territory—association remains unique, it is not met with anywhere else in the world. The second quality of this is the fact that it stimulates the composition of poetry of the highest aesthetic standard. Nature plays a significant role as a back drop in all literatures; but it was the Tamil genius that meticulously contrived an elaborate pattern of associating specific parts of the

landscape most appropriately with specific moods of love. Thus the wooded slopes of—mountains became the patterned back drop for premarital love appropriately as they ofter perfect cover for young lovers to meet in secret tryst. The sea-shore on the other hand, forms the perfect setting for the delineation of love-in-separation with the lady pining away for her lover who crossed the seas in search of wealth and failed to return on the day promised.

This fact that the setting is very appropriate for the sentiment portrayed, though important, is not the only reason to commend this pattern for our acceptance. The reader by constant association gets to thinking of premarital love the moment mountain slopes are described : his mind is prepared to receive a poem on premarital love and we can be sure the poem will produce heightened enjoyment on account of his preparedness of the mind to receive it. Now if this process of association of the various moods of love with the aspects of landscape had gone on for some length of time, it is easy to see that when the mention of an animal or a bird or a flower characteristic of say, the mountain slopes can evoke in the reader the sentiment of premarital love.

The literary significance of this can be easily imagined : owing to the fact of constant association, the poet is able, by the mere suggestion of a bird or beast or flower, to evoke the desired sentiment. Not only are tiresome descriptions avoided : any thing that is deftly suggested produces greater pleasure than that which is stated in bald language. Thus the ancient tradition has placed an excellent literary tool in the hands of poets through which to evoke the subtlest literary enjoyment by means of suggestion.

The second concept in this ancient grammar which I would place before the reader is one which is of fundamental application and can be regarded as a core concept. In the Sanskrit world this was discovered for the first time in Kashmir in the 8th Century by the greatest rhetorician in Sanskit, Anandavardhana. Research scholars have searched in vain for a hint of this in the earlier works on poetics like Bharata's Natyasastra. So we can accept as authoritative the claim that it was Anandavardhana who propounded for the first time the principle that each unitary work should be ruled by only one sentiment. In a big work other sentiments could come in as ancillary but only one sentiment should be allowed sway over the entire work. This principle has been accepted universaly by all the writers on poetics who came after Anandavardhana.

Now it is my endeavour to show that this principle had been clearly enunciated more than two thousand years earlier in the Tamil world by Tolkappiar. In sutra 15 of Akathinai iyal in Poruladhikaram, he lays down that out of the three factors involved, except the third the sentiment, the other two may occur mixed up. The idea is that while references to the flora and fauna to the part of the day and the season of the year characteristic of a particular division of the landscape may occur in poems mixed up with those characteristic of another landscape division, the sentiment characteristic of one should not occur mixed up with a sentiment characteristic of another. In other words, Tolkappiar as a practical law-giver was inclined to be tolerant of a little mix-up in non-essentials if circumstances warrant it: but he ruthlessly banned the sway of one sentiment being challenged by another as he clearly felt that what is involved here is the heart of the matter where no compromise can be permitted.

The question may be raised-what literary purpose is served by insisting so rigidly on conformity with this rule ? It is universaly admitted that sentiment rules poetry and all other aspects like diction and atmosphere only subserve this supreme objective of evocation of sentiment. A sentiment like love presented with art works on the emotional personality of the listener : it combines with the mass of experience of similar emotion gathered and preserved in it-gathered from real life as well as from literature : the present sentiment acting on this similar experience produces aesthetic delight. Now it is essential that this action and combination that take place in the emotional personality of the listener do not—produce a medley, a maelstrom of emotions. A single sentiment that is adequately evoked should play upon that area of the emotional personality where a similar kind of experience had been deposited for this desirable aesthetic enjoyment to be generated. If more than one sentiment impinges on the emotional personality it may have two effects—this second sentiment may seek experience similar to it (but different from that on which the first sentiment has begun to act) and begin to act upon it producing parallel aesthetic vibrations which may produce confusion ; or this second sentiment may act upon the same area on which the first is acting producing counter vibration leading to reduction of impact and consequently of final resultant enjoyment. Either way the arousal of a second sentiment is undesirable : a single sentiment should have undisputed sway over the heart of the listener if he is to desire aesthetic enjoyment-which, as is universaly admitted, is the end-purpose of all literary effort.

That Tolkappiar realised this psychological factor and provided for a legislation against such eddying of sentiments far ahead of any other writer in the world is a matter of pride to Tamilians. These many titles to unique greatness we find in Tolkappiam deserve better recognition than is being accorded to them now ; and I would appeal to scholars to conduct more meaningful and purposive research into many such concepts found imbedded in this matchless work of grammar.

CULTURAL Heritage of the Tamils

P. N. APPUSWAMY,

"Culture" originally meant the tilling of the soil. But, in course of time, by metaphorical extensions, the word has come to mean both the process and the result of any training or discipline by which man's moral or intellectual nature is elevated. Enlightenment, civilisation, refinement, tolerance, modesty, and many other qualities that are associated with a higher life are included in that term. The great aim of culture is to direct our minds to ascertain what perfection is, and to make it prevail over all other considerations. It is culture which helps us acquaint ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit. Sweetness and light pervade it from base to pinnacle. and are both its cause and effect.

The Tamils are the people who now inhabit the major portion of the extreme south-east of India, and are unfied by the language they speak, and by several characteristically great achievements through a long term of years. They have several unique features ; and these features have come down to them from the remote past, and form their special heritage.

It does not matter whether they are the sons of the soil, or immigrants from the south or north, through land or by sea. They have been a fairly compact group with customs and manners of their own, blended together by literature, history, tradition, and inclination, from very ancient times. All these broadly revealed to us by their long long line of poets imaginatively though not with precise accuracy and minuteness of detail.

The ancient Tamils who seem to have lived a full life as revealed in their literature have not left us any concrete records in stonewood, or brick and mortar, or as drawings or paintings, or carvings as the Greeks and the Romans, the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, or as some of the primitive prehistoric men have left, in caves and elsewhere : Mohenjo-Daro is still an engma. The records of their lives of the ways they thought and lived, have however come down to us through vitally throbbing, absorbing, and imperishable poetry. Men of many occutions, living in different parts of the ancient Tamil country, have sung of its hills and dales, its cities and villages, its rivers and streams, its loves and hates, its wars, its kings and ordinary folk, and of the life they led.

It is true that poets do not give us photographic pictures, or sketches drawn to scale. Poets never do so. Nevertheless, they give us a general overall idea of the lives that those ancient people led Their verses is of extraordinary quality. Warmth of feeling, and heat of passion, lead to exaggerated praise of the valour and generosity of kings, of the beauty and nobility of women, of the poverty of minstrels and poets, of the richness of their fields and farms and the drabness of their deserts. But by and large, the pictures the poets have painted of the prevalent culture are trustworthy. It is an inherent, culture which has undergone modifications as a result of contacts with other cultures, at various periods of its growth and development through a process of osmosis up to the present day. We are the recipients of that rich heritage ; and we should do all that we can to preserve the best in it, not boastfully but in all modesty and humility as befits our culture.

That ancient culture of the Tamils covered every aspect of life as all great cultures do. Religion, morality, kingship, government, war, peace, love, hate, friendship, detachment, arts, crafts, music, dancing, games and pastimes, joy and sorrow, births and deaths, were all parts of it. We find poets dealing with these and giving us revealing glimpses of the behavioural activities of the society as a whole, and of individuals named and mostly unnamed.

Evolution is a process which is paramount in all fields. It has operated in the field of culture too. No culture is static, or can be. Posterity has a right, an indefeasible right, to change some of the features of ancestry, and we have in fact done so in respect of many details, keeping the essentials intact.

The earliest literary expression of every linguistic group or nation is oral verse and song in praise of its gods and heroes. The Gods were at first "Gods of nature" the sun and the moon ; the sea, the sky and the clouds. ; the wind, rain,and fire ; and the unseen, but felt and feared, good and bad and more or less divine demigods. In the earliest body of Tamil verse which has come down to us and which has been compiled into nine anthologies. We find some of these indigenous gods and divinite praised and placated with prayers and offerings. We find references also to Muruga (Cevvel), Vishnu (Mal) Indra, Varuna, and Durga (Korravai) as the presiding deities of the five kinds of landscapes into which the Tamil master—grammarian divided the country and its

features. Siva and the avatars of Vishnu are mentioned. Theocrasy had started its unifying work integration.

Vinayaka, the elephant faced God, whose images are found in their thousands all over the Tamil country had not got any footing at all, and was unknown, in the Tamil country. He is a heritage, acquired by the Tamils later on, and now become part of the Tamil heritage with an entirely Tamil name, and worshipped by devout millions of people. More and more gods and goddesses, beneficent and malefic also form part of our religio-cultural heritage today. And per-contra, Indra, Balarama, and some minor gods, who had been given temple homes to live in and had been honoured by festivalshave now quit, and are no longer worshipped as they had been. Even of the great trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, Brahma has been neglected, and it is only the other two, in many of their variant forms and names, who now form part of our religio-social heritage from the remote and nearer past.

The ancient Tamils set great store by their moral codes. Truth had perhaps the greatest emphasis. Nonkilling (Though these people were in the main non-vegetarians eating meat and fish), had a high-place in their moral code, as had been forcibly expressed in the *Kural* (of some what later date than the Sangam classics proper gratitude, friendship, forgiveness, humility, learning and knowledge, were all valued very highly and those concepts form part of our moral heritage. They have been embodied in the *Eighteen Minor classics* in semi-immortal words. They have also been emphasized in the latter religious period and also in the epic and story poem period as well. We have these works with us today in almost their full form. We may even say in more than their full form, for there have been some accretions by way of interpolation. Chastity in women has been given a prominence, which, perhaps, no other literatures or people have given to it.

The kingly virtues, and kingly duties, were well-defined, and sought to be enhanced by the praises of great and discriminating poets. The kings too, in the main, seemed to have sought to live up to them; and were sometimes foolishly generous, and foolhardily brave. The famous episode of Picir Andai, the poet of the Pandya country who instinctively loved the Chola King, and the Chola king who instinctively loved the poet whom he had not met, form a great theme in a number of verses in *Purananuru*. The friendship of Pari and Kapila is another instance of such a bond between a king and a commoner. These and some other episodes represent the ancient poets as beautiful and effectual angels beating their luminous wings to purpose in a highly cultured, largely learned, and tolerant society. We must try and preserve this precious heritage of ours for our posterrity, and to transmit it to the world.

Picir Andai's indirect (or is to direct) advice to the king not to levy heavy taxes, nor to collect them with severity, is one classic example of the status of a great poet. (See annexure purananuru 184).

Another poet with remarkable courage advised the king not to battle for supremacy against his rebellious sons, and to abdicate. The king's reaction is a noble soliloquy ;and was followed by hisabdication (See annexure Purananuru-14)

Those kings, who were warrior statesmen, had armies at their command, ministers and counsellers to advise them, and courts of poets (consisting of both men and women a remarkable thing for those far-off days) over which they presided, and gave lavsish gifts with discrimination (they were rebuked when they erred or delayed). This heritage we have altogether lost. All the kings have gone, and the people have taken charge. The kings mantle has fallen on a maltitude, whose duty it is to maintain the old glory.

Those kings of old were ambitious, and could not tolerate powerful or rich kingdoms next door-war and bloodshed, ruin and devastation, seemed to have raised their ugly heads often, and rather curiously praised by the poets who seemed to fan their pride into destructive flame. All that has now gone, but men's rivalries never die and all the world is still seeking complete amity with its neighbours. Let us hope that the spirit of good will proclaimed so nobly and well in *Purananuru* verse 192 will prevail and that we shall prove true to the ideals profounded by our wise men nearly two thousand years ago. These poets of old came from cities and villages, and from all classes of society and from men and women purusing all trades and occupations. It was not a casteless or heartless society, but one full of good will.

If the poets speak true (there is no reason why they should not) young men and women had opportunities of meeting each other in secret, or with the connivance of companions and nannies, and of expressing their love for each other, and ultimately marrying and settling down. This aspect of the more or less free society of those days has found expression in their amazingly rich poetry. Dr. A. K. Ramanujan has these beautiful words to say of this poetry. In their antiquity and in their contemporaneity, there is not much in any Indian literature equal to these quiet and dramatic Tamil poems. In their values and stances, they represent a mature classical poetry ; passion is balanced by courtesy, transparency by ironies and nuances of design, impersonality by vivid detail, leanness of line by richness of implication. These poems are not just the earliest evidence of the Tamil genius. The Tamils in all their 2,000 years of literary effort, wrote nothing better.

But the background of this heritage, the milieu in which these poems were composed, exists no longer. So this rich heritage is only a memory : but a memory which should be indelibly engraved in our minds, and remembered with pride for ever and for ever. I have often wished that another Arthur Waley, or Helen Waddell would come and translate these ancient verses into English verse, so that the whole world (which the English language reaches) might appreciate these, the greatest of our heritages from the past. Poetry is distilled culture, perfumed, sweetened, and set to music. Ancient Tamil poetry would be our best gift to the world. It is a heritage which does not diminish by the sharing; it increases rather. Preached morality is dry, and cold. It freezes the heart. No body of people ever became good by merely being told to behave and to do what is best to do. No nation was stirred to action by set rules and codes. Poetry on the other hand, warms the heart; stirs the emotions: makes the blood course through our veins. It puts new life into us : and stirs us to noble actions. Let us cherish this ancient, yet evergreen, poetry of ours : and give it to all the world and be happy in the giving.

No, it is not the paddy—corn
That sustains this earth so broad ;
Nor is it the water either ;
It is only the king who sustains it.
Therefore,
It is the duty of the king,
Who has an immense army of spearmen,
To recognise that it is he alone
Who sustains the earth.

Purananuru—186 **MOCIKIRANAR**

LIFE'S PHILOSOPHY

We are the natives of every city :
And the kinsmen of all on earth !
Neither evil, nor good,
Ever befalls at another's bid :
Suffering from pain, and relief therefrom
Are similar too :
Death is nothing new :
We never shout in joy,
How sweet is life !' :
Nor in disgust exclaim,
Evil, how evil, is life !'
Like a small raft,
Caught in the waters of a broad river, bark,
Which swollen with the flood
Battles against the rocks with a hissing roar,
While the clouds above flash their lightings,
And pour down heavy drops of cold rain.
Is main's frail life
Swept along on its predestined course
These we understand beyond all doubt
From the revelations of the seers who know.
Therefore,
We never praise, nor ever marvel at
The eminent and the great ;
Nor ever, ever, do we despise the lowly—

—Purananuru-192. **KANIYANPUNKUNRAN**

CHASTITY

Hero, bowman mighty shouldered !
On Lanka's hills, amidst the swelling waters,
I saw no lady fair, none engaged
In penances dire and severe !
But noble birth, infinite patience,
And constant chastity,
The delirious dance of this trinity,
I saw,
You awell enshrined within her eyes,
You abide in every thought of hers,
And in each word and mood.

Ramayanam—Sundarakandam—**KAMBAN**.

HER LIQUID EYES.

Near the mighty ocean
As black as darkness spread,
Beside the white sand-dunes
As bright as moonlight heaped,
Branches of mastwood trees
Which are as dark as iron
Rain their finegrains of pollen
Like a shower of gold.
There in little hamlets fisherfolk dwell.
And she their artless daughter
Has liquid eyes, large and glorious
Ah ! They have given me a heart-ache.

Yapparungala-k karikai—**ANONYMOUS**

PINING IN LOVE

Ah! my lover tarries,
Though spring time is here,
And around the heavy boughs
Of black-stemmed mulberry trees
Which scent the air,
Now hum and dance
The drunken bees.

—Ainkurunuru—342 **OTALATAIYAR**

HAPPY LOVE

Wider far than the earth,
Loftier far than the heavens,
Deeper far than the unplumbable sea,
Is our love far each other—
Between me and the lord of the land
On whose hill slopes bees make rich honey
From the fragrant flowers
Of the dark-demmed conehead shrub.

—Kuruntokai—3 : **TEVAKULATTAR**.

THE KING'S SOLILOQUY

Those who ask themselves,
'Shall we do the right, or shall we not ?
Those men of clouded minds,
Which have not shed their dogging doubt,
Are pusillanimous cowards indeed.
A hunter after big game
May catch an elephant ;
And one who seeks to trap a quail
May return empty-handed.
Therefore,
If deeds done upon this earth
Will have their rewards hereafter,
Great-hearted men of noble minds
Will enjoy the pleasures of a higher world
Where there is neither sorrow, nor toil
If you deny that there can be any such felicity
In a sorrowless, toilless world,
They would be born again on the earth
And would have great joy in that rebirth ;
If you deny that too, and say
They will not be born again;
Even then it would still be good :
For then, having led spotless lives,
They would establish an abiding fame.
Towering as high as the peaks of the Himalayas.

—Purananuru-214 **KOPERUNCOLA**

DEVOTIONAL

Like a flawless lute,
Or the young night's moon,
Or the southern breeze,
Or the glorious spring,
Or a lily-pool loud,
With swarming bees—
Is the shade of the feet
Of the Lord, our father.

Tevaram--**APPAR**

POETESSES in Sangam era

Tamizhagam, was ruled by the Chera, Chola and Pandyas. They were brave warriors and great rulers of the country. They patronised literature and art. A number of poets havesang of their glory in war, of theirvalarous deeds and of their munificence.

In Madurai, the Kingdom of the Pandyas the Tamil Sangam flourished. There were three sangams or Academies, the last of which existed in the first centuries A. D., The Academy would accept work only of great merit. They had adopted a way of testing the literary merit of any work. The king and the men of literature would gather around a lotus tank in which there was a wooden-plank. The work would be placed on it. If the work had merit it would stay afloat; if the work had no literary merit the plank would sink.

The three Academies had hundreds of poets and there were a few who had earned great repute, like Tiruvalluvar, Kapilar, Nakirar, Sattanar etc.,

Besides poets there have been poetesses also. There have been 30 or more poetesses who have contributed 150 lyrics to the eight collections—especially Narrinai, Kurunthokai, Pattirru-p-pattu,Aham and Pura-Nanuru. The poetesses all had one thing in common. Their lyric verses were stray verses, sang on the spur of the moment. They befriended the rich and the poor alike, taught morals of eternal application. They were lovable persons, old but never too old to sing. The thousands of proverbs used by the common folk are ascribed to them.

Outstanding among these poetesses is Avvai. Her's is a household name and there are many legends about this honoured and grande dame of letters. One would have lisped her verses of wisdom even as a child. Legend has it that she is the elder sister of Tiruvalluvar the author of the Kural. There have been many poetesses of this name, but their periods cannot be fixed with any degree of certainty.

Avvai, lived during the time of Porunar-k-killi and was patronised by Attikaman Anchi ; and after his death by Ezhini, the son of Neduman Anchi.

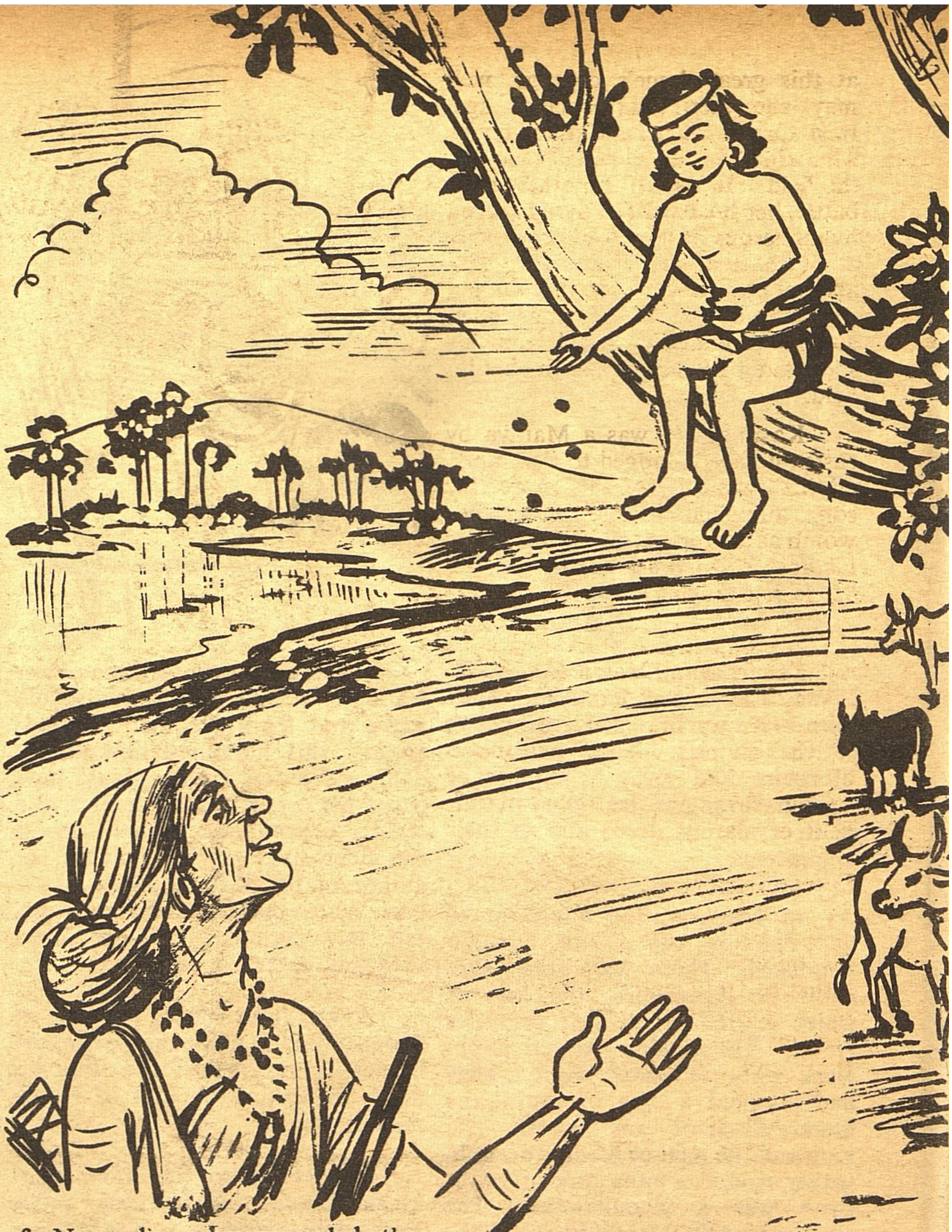
She addressed the three royal kings—Chola Rajasuyam vetta-Pornarkilli, Pandya Kannaper—irinda-Ukkira - p-Peruvazuluthi, and Chera Mavenko and advised them to do good deeds and be compassionate towards all living creatures. According to legend, her life was prolonged by a Nellik-Kani (Jumbu fruit) which was given to her by her patron Atikkaman—Anchi who thought that she deserved to have the fruit. Her's was a Bohemian's life, who went on foot visiting the lands of the three-crowned heads as well as the chieftan's who welcomed and honoured her. On her way she occasionally found her meal by singing a few verses at random. Her brief thersesverses were full of wisdom—

Avvai went as an ambassador to Tondaiman's (Illanthirayan') court on behalf of Atikkaman The chieftan took her around his arsenal and proudly showed her around. It was well stocked with shinning weapons of war, ready for use. The intelligent poetess took the hint. She immediately came forth with a lyric where she compares the burnished state of Tondaiman's weapons with Atikaman's which are ever blunted by constant use on the battlefield and are ever in need of repair at the blacksmith's. Avvai describes Anchi's arms and their power at some length ; swords, spears, elephants, cavalry, infantry and advises his foe to submit to him. One of her verses is a Virali-arrup-pattu.

Avvai compares the wealth of the luxurious king of Tondai(Kanchi) with that of her own warlike chief Bedecked with peacock feathers, garlanded with flower. Fine are the Tondai spears in the spacious armoury with their strong shafts and sharp points bright with ghee. The weapon of my king are blunt with fighting. Broken their points through parrying the thrusts of the foe. The swordsmith's forge is busy with repairs. My king, when rich, freely gives food away, when poor, he messes with his men. He is the head of the family of the poor. Yet great is he with his sharp pointed spear.

Puram 95, translated by John. R. Marr.

Legend has it that when once her brilliance went to her head and made her complacent, Lord Muruga wanted to curb her egoism. After a tiresome journey Avvai sought the shades of a Naval (Jambu) tree—Muruga as an young boy was perched on the tree. Seeing Avvai, he asked her whether she would like to have a hot or cold fruit. She could not make out what he



meant by a hot fruit ; but neverthe-less asked for one. Muruga shook the branches and the fruits fell down on the sand. She picked up the fruits and blew hard to remove the sand clinging to the fruits. Then the young boy pointed out that she could not have blown at all but for the heat. At this flash of wit, her countenance fell and her pride abated. This discomfiture taught her that her knowledge was but a drop in the ocean and that she had much to learn.

Avvai was a believer in the ubiquity of God, which the follow-ing incident would illustrate. A holy mother of a certain temple rebuked Avvai for having stretched her legs towards the idol which was sacrilegious. Avvai felt that the re-proach was not correct. She politely asked the woman to show her the direction where god was not present, so that she would place her legs there. The priestess was non plussed and admitted her ignorance.

Kapilar's supposed biographic Ahaval mentions Nannidhucheri as her birth place and a tailor's house as her nursery. The great dame's lyrics are 45 ; while 15 are in Kuruntoka and 17 in puram.

Kakkai-P-Pattiniar-was not only a poetess, also a grammarian of repute. Her grammatical work is Kakkai-P-Patiniyam. She is the contemporary of Tolkappiyar and as one of the twelve disciples who learnt at the feet of the sage Agasthiyar. She is referred to with respect by commentators and followed by authors of the period. She was a poetess of great repute.

The young daughters of Pari were also great poetesses who could compose verses and elegies.

Yet another poetess is the queen of Bhuta Pandya, who performed sati. She contributed verse to the Puram collection.

Adhimanthiyar was another poetess, a daughter of the Chola Karikala I and the mother of the celebrated Chera Chengutuvan. Among those of a lesser stature were Velliveethiyar, Nappasalaiyar, Masathiyar.

Kakkai-P-Patiniar-Nachchellai-yar figures as the author of the sixth ten of Pattiru-P-pattu. The hero was Atukotpattuch Cheralatan, half-brother of Senguttuvan and brother of Narmudi, who rewarded the poetess with gold weighing 9 Ka for making jewels and 100,000 Kanam in cash, besides entertaining her in his court permanently. The poetess acquired her title from having intro-duced a crow as a leading feature in a song into Kuruntokai 210. Nali and Tondi are also mentioned, the song being to the effect that even the fine rice of Tondi mixed with ghee yielded by the cow's of Nalli's sheperds would not be adequate re-compense (bali offering) for the crow that by its cawing announced the return of the lover to the beloved

The Poetess contribution to Sangam classics are Kuru 210. Pati 51-60, Puram 278.

Okkur masat-thiar-a kins woman of Masat-Thanar and a native of Okur, wrote lyrics of the Mullait-tinai, descriptive of heroism. Her lyrics are two one in Aham and one in Puram. " Our heart ceases

at this great dame's courage, well may she merit her ancient age. In a former war, her father it was who killed by an elephant, died in the field. It was in the other day's battle, her husband fell overpowered by numerous hosts ; And now today at the beat of the drum, Delighted and yet how sad was she this woman with an only son. She lovingly oiled and combed his hair, gave him his spear and bade him speak the battle-field.

Kaval-pendu was a Marava by caste and she belonged to the family of village guards. She had a warrior son, and she looked upon her womb as a tiger's den, hollow during his absence in times of war. Puram 86, is her single lyric.

Holding fast to the admantine pillar of my humble house, you ask, " Where is your son ? ' I know not where he may be. This, my womb which bore him. Is now like a den of rocks deserted by a tiger ; and he full sure, will be found in the field of war.

Perum-Koppendu :

At the death of Bhuta pandya his queen Perum Koppendu when disuaded from entering the funeral pyre along with her husband, reprimanded her bad advisers thus: and entered the pyre.

" Oh ye of wisdom full ? Oh
ye of wisdom full !

Ye bid us not so forth to death.
Ye could restrain ;

O ye of wisdom full but evil is
your counsel here !

We are not there content to live
forlorn,

And feed on bitter herbs, when
once they feasted royalty
We lie not on rough stones, who
slept ere while on sumptous couch

The pyre's black logs heaped up
in burning ground

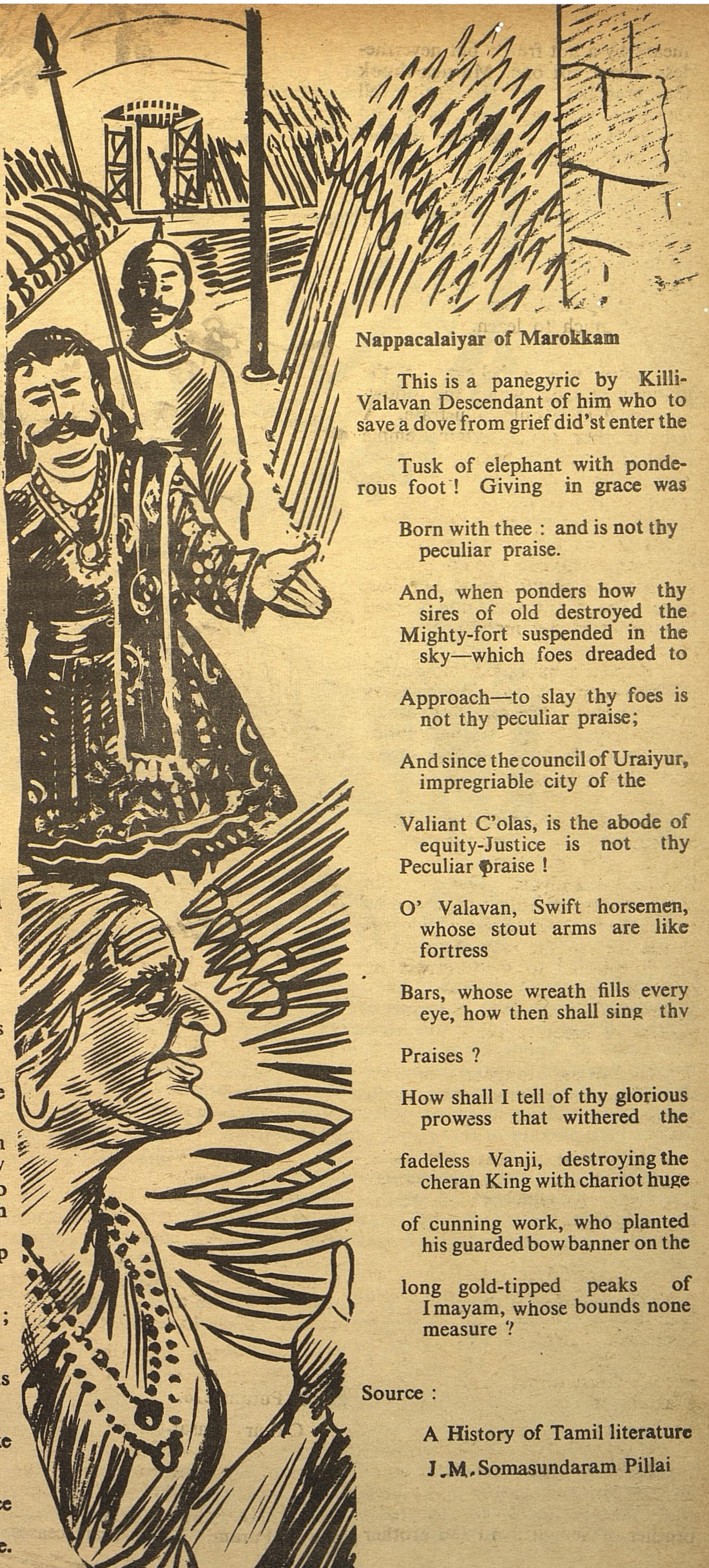
To you indeed seem terrible ;
to us

Because our mighty spouse is
dead.

The waters of the pleasant lake
where spreads

The lotus flowers and the fierce
fires are one

Dr. G. U. Pope.



Nappacalaiyar of Marokkam

This is a panegyric by Killi-Valavan Descendant of him who to save a dove from grief did'st enter the

Tusk of elephant with ponderous foot ! Giving in grace was

Born with thee : and is not thy
peculiar praise.

And, when ponders how thy
sires of old destroyed the
Mighty-fort suspended in the
sky—which foes dreaded to

Approach—to slay thy foes is
not thy peculiar praise;

And since the council of Uraiyur,
impregriable city of the

Valiant C'olas, is the abode of
equity-Justice is not thy
Peculiar praise !

O' Valavan, Swift horsemen,
whose stout arms are like
fortress

Bars, whose wreath fills every
eye, how then shall sing thy

Praises ?

How shall I tell of thy glorious
prowess that withered the

fadeless Vanji, destroying the
cheran King with chariot huge

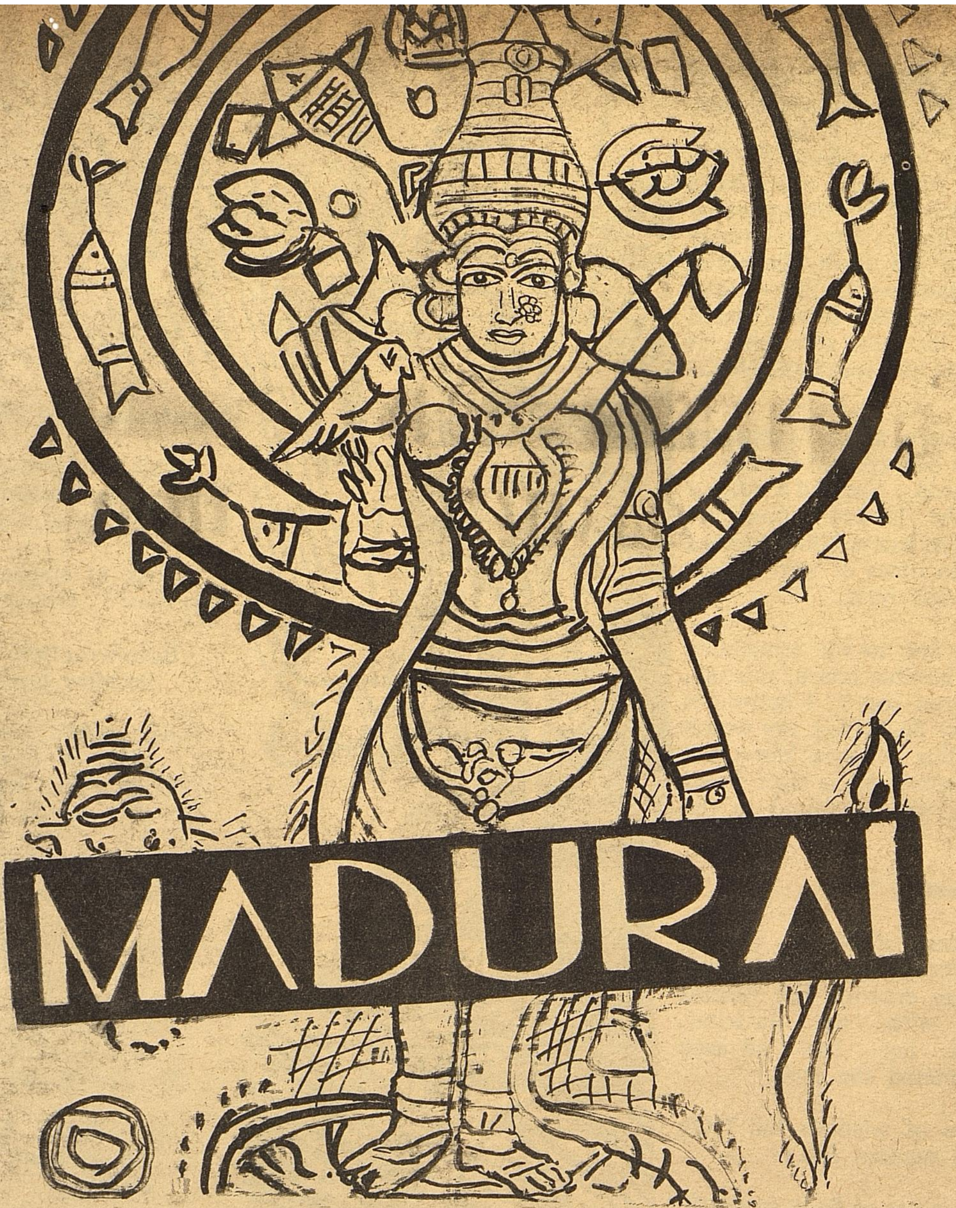
of cunning work, who planted
his guarded bow banner on the

long gold-tipped peaks of
Imayam, whose bounds none
measure ?

Source :

A History of Tamil literature

J.M. Somasundaram Pillai



Madurai in Tamilnadu is one of the ancient and holy cities. It was once the mighty capital of the ancient Pandya Kingdom. It is mentioned as 'Alavai' in Thevaram of Tamil literature. The history of this place is described in detail in the Thiruvilayadalpurana' in Tamil. Originally, it was known as 'Kadamba vanam'. Even today a fragment of this tree can be seen in the northern prakara of the temple of Sundareswara.

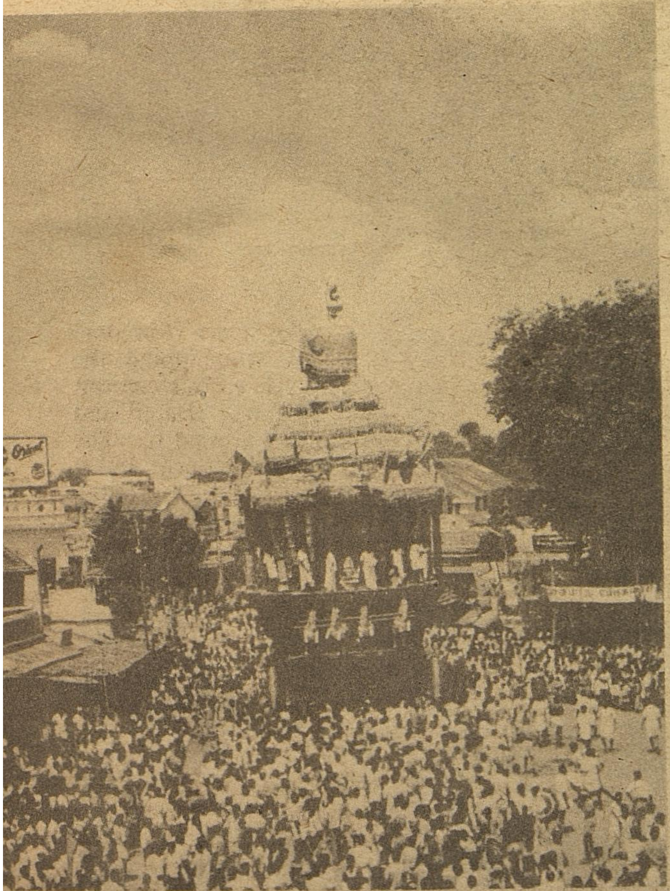
Madurai has been famous as the seat of Tamil Literature. Conferences of scholars called Sangams were held from remote ages. In one of those gatherings of scholars, Lord Sundareswara is said to have played the part of a poet.

Madurai is also famous as a 'Sivasthala'. It is here that Lord Shiva is represented as the dancing Nataraja with His left foot on the ground, while in all other representations, He stands on His right foot. The hall where Nataraja is said to have danced is known as 'Velliambalam'

The discovery of the sacred place is attributed to a merchant by name Dhananjaya. According to the legend, the merchant was returning from the west coast after a flourishing trade. He had to cross this place which was a forest then. As he was crossing the forest depths the sun set. The day was Somavara (Monday) and the merchant observed Indra worshipping the Swayambhu Linga. The merchant related this incident to the King who at once had the forest cleared and built the temple and the beautiful city around it. The town is planned in the shape of a coiled serpent and it is said that the design of the town was suggested to the King by Lord Sundareswara Himself. Hence it is called Alavai in tamil.

Madurai contains one of the most sacred and famous temples that of goddess Meenakshi and Her consort, Lord Sankara, in the form of Lord Sundareswara. This twin temple is situated in a parallelogram 847 x 729 feet and contains 9 gopurams, the biggest being 150 feet high. In this temple, the famous festival Chitra Pournami is celebrated on a grand scale and it attracts lakhs and lakhs of devotees from all over the country. In mythology, it is said that Indra came down to pray to the Lord at Madurai on this day to expiate the sins he had committed. This event is denoted by the fact that the shrine of Sundareswara is supported by eight elephants supposed to be the 'Ashta Diggajas', Goddess as Meenakshi, was born as the daughter of the Pandya king Malayadhwaja and God Sundareswara is said to have sought her hand in marriage.

The Porch leading to the Meenakshi temple is called ' Ashta Sakti Mandapam '.



The celebrated ' thousand pillared mandapa ' a beautiful structure with sculptures on every one of its thousand stone pillars, is within the temple.

Opposite to the temple of Lord Sundareswara, there is the 'Pudumandapam ' or new mandapam measuring 333 feet by 105 feet and it is excellently well-sculptured. This is also called the ' Vasanta Mandapam '. In the middle row of pillars can be seen the statues of ten of the Nayaka kings of Madurai along with their wives. The pillars in the outer rooms contain elaborate sculptures of the various forms of Shiva. signifying his LEELAs.

The palace of Thirumalai Nayak is situated about one kilometer from the temple. It was constructed during the reign of Thirumalai Nayak. This contains beautiful domes and arches. Thirumalai Nayak Mahal is a beautiful palace with artistic skill exhibited in abundance. It has a dome 60 feet in diameter and 70 feet in height.

Madurai was the seat of the Pandya Kings and has had a glorious history of great contribution towards the development of Tamil literature. It is said that one of the Pandya Kings had even sent an envoy to Augustus Ceaser, the Roman emperor, in the first century B. C. During the medieval period, Malik Kafur, one of the generals of Alauddin Khilji, invaded the South and came upto Madurai. Afterwards, the Muslims established an independant Muslim Kingdom till the rise up of the Kingdom of the Vijayanagar.

Within the temple precincts, there is the famous tank " Pontamarai Kulam " (The Lotus Tank), wherein the Sanghapalakai is seen even today. Legend has it that poetical compositions of various authors used to be adjudged by placing their Manuscripts on this plank and that unworthy poetical compositions would not find a place on it by divine dispensation.

VAIDYARATNAM P. S. VARIER'S

Arya Vaidya Sala

KOTTAKKAL

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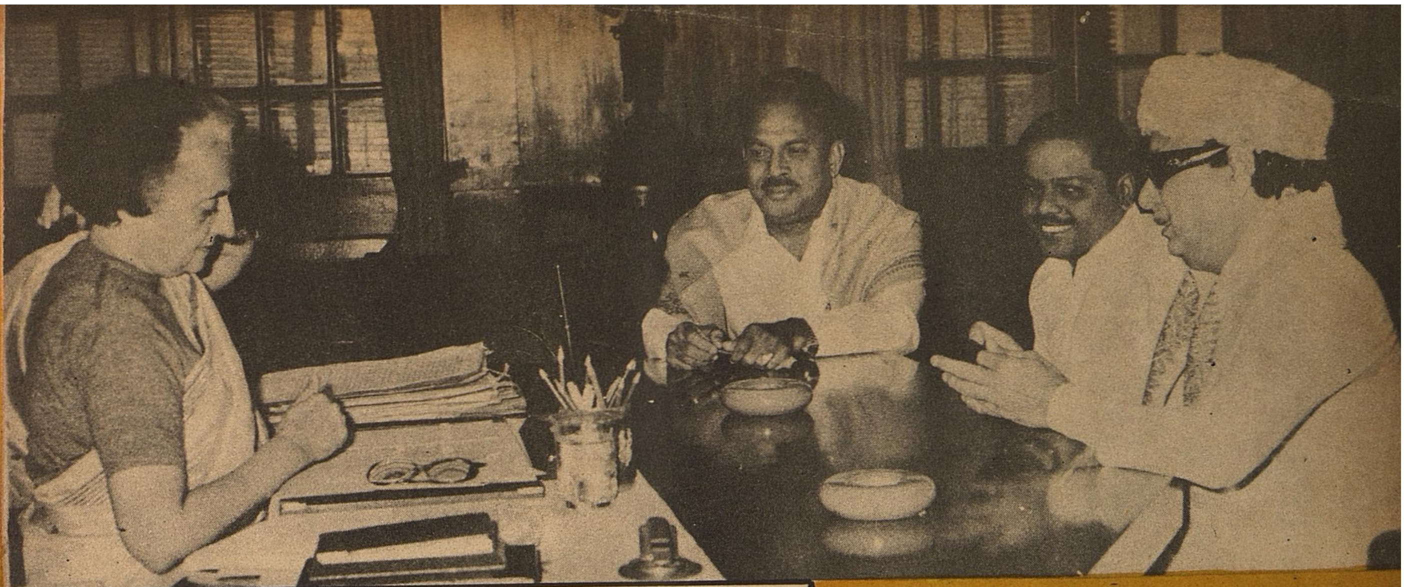
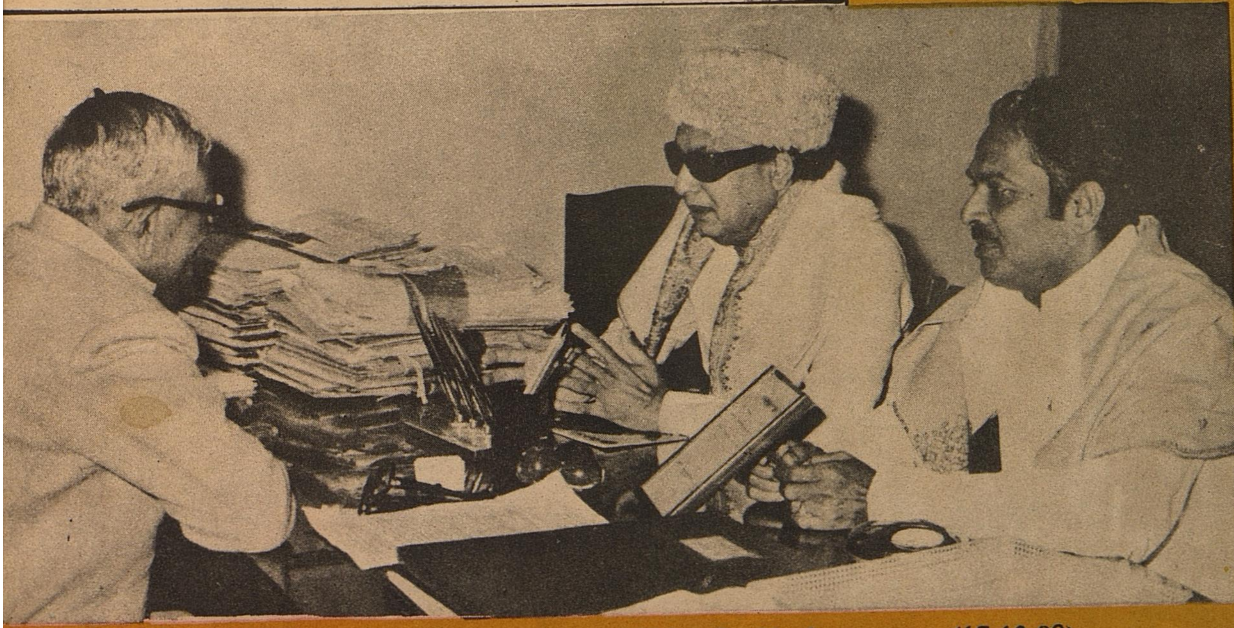


With the Prime Minister (16-12-80)

Chief Minister in the Capital



▲ With the Union Finance Minister Thiru R. Venkataraman (17-12-80)

With Thiru TIWARI Vice-Chairman, Planning Commission (15-12-80) ▼

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